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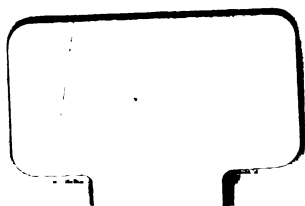
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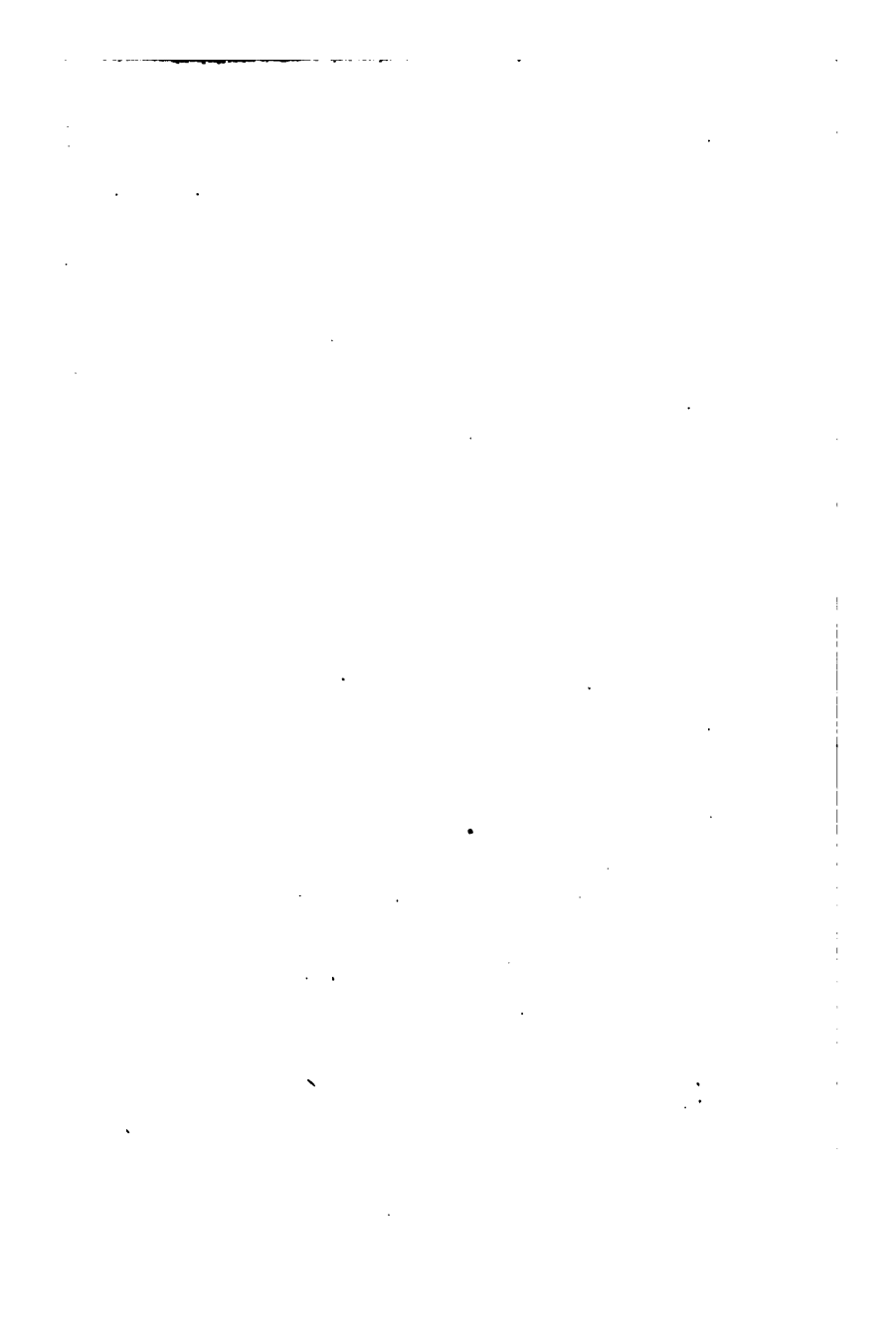
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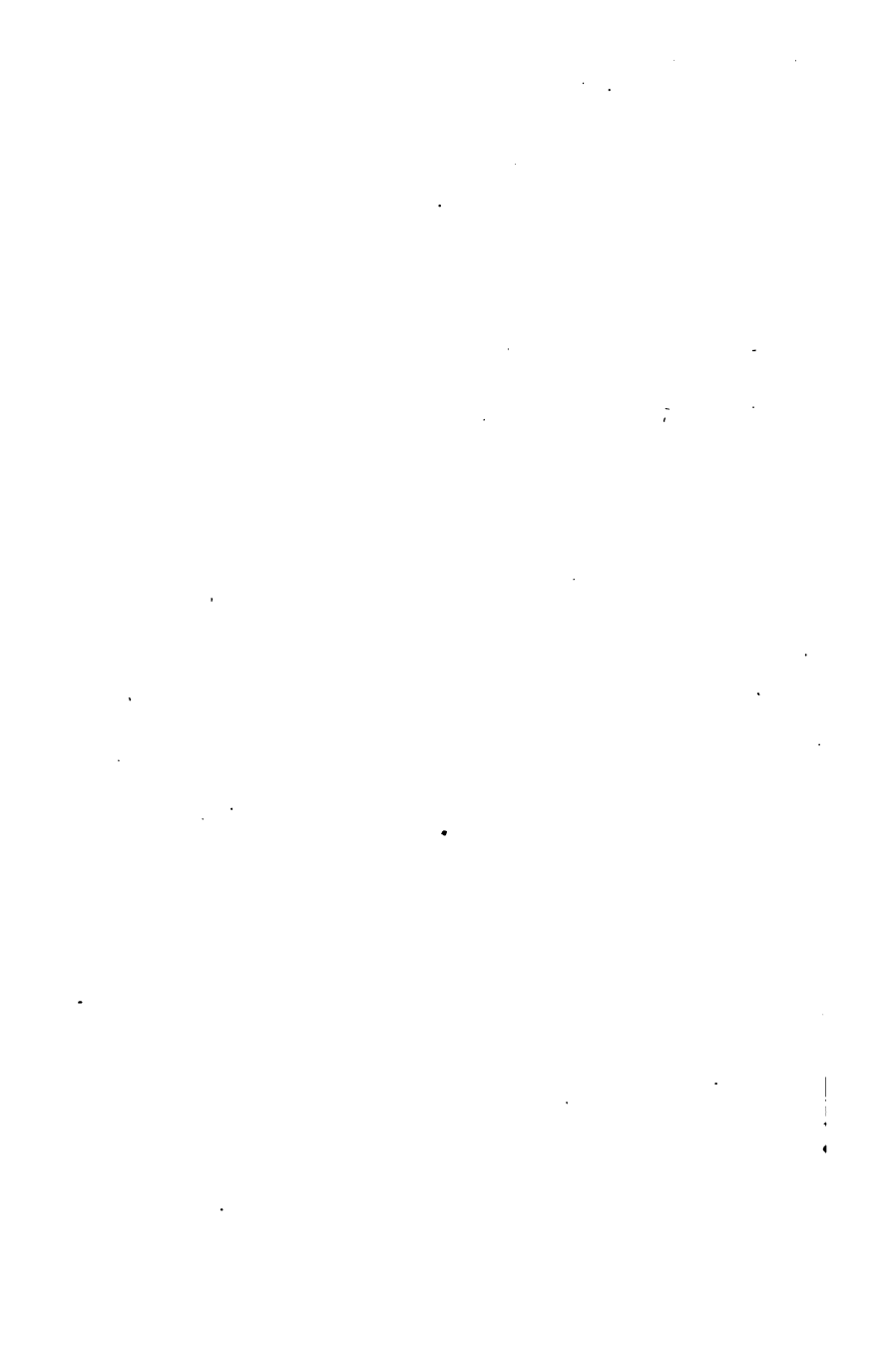
BRIEF HISTORY
OF THE
CHRISTIAN CHURCH



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A BRIEF HISTORY
OF
THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH,
FROM THE FIRST CENTURY TO THE
REFORMATION.

BY
J. S. BARTLETT.

"PROCVL DUBIO ARCA NOE FIGURA EST PEREGRINANTIS
IN HOC SECVLO ECCLESIE, QUE FIT SALVA PER LIGNVM IN
QVO PERENDIT CHRISTVS."—*S. Augustine De Civitate Dei*, xv. 27.

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P R E F A C E.

THE writer, in endeavouring to describe within the limits of this little Manual the chief events in the history of the Church of Christ, would be understood to disclaim all pretensions to depth or originality of research. The sources from which his historical information has been derived are acknowledged in the notes appended to the respective pages. He is desirous of expressing his great obligations to the History of Dr. Waddington, from which has been adapted the chronological table at the end of this work. He is also indebted for much information on the Early Church to the writings of Cave on the Fathers, Dr. Hook's Ecclesiastical Biographies, and Bingham's Primitive Antiquities; for the history of later times, to the pages of Berington, D'Aubigné, Mr. Churton, and Dr. Wordsworth.

This Manual will be found, it is feared, in

some respects necessarily defective; and an apology is required for any attempt to compress within so small a space the general history of sixteen centuries. The writer trusts that this attempt may be pardoned, in consideration of an imperfect, but not careless, diligence; and that the perusal of the following pages may to some degree teach the true lesson to be gathered from all Church-history,—“faith in the Author of all truth, the Founder and Preserver of that religion of which the Church is His appointed keeper and witness in the world ^a.”

^a Churton.

A BRIEF HISTORY

OF

THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH, &c.

THE FIRST CENTURY.

THE earliest records of the Christian Church, which are contained in the Acts of the Apostles, extend from the period of the Ascension to that of St. Paul's first imprisonment at Rome. From their pages we learn the early progress of the faith, the arguments by which its truth was vindicated, and, in some degree, the success which attended its propagation. The history of the Church at Jerusalem, and of those miraculous gifts which were bestowed for its progress and extension; the trials accompanying the first labours of the apostles and early Christians, are clearly recorded by the pen of the Evangelist. Further than this, we read of the subsequent increase of the Church, by the conversion and preaching of the great Apostle of the Gentiles; when the gospel, which had been first proclaimed at Jerusalem, was, in conformity with the injunction of its Divine Founder, "preached unto all nations." We cannot, however, derive from the narrative of St. Luke full information as to the general extension of Christianity. His direct object, as announced in the preface to the Acts of the Apostles, was to confirm the believer in the truth of those doctrines wherein he had been instructed, rather than to inform him of the amount of credence which

Early progress of Christianity.
The Acts of the Apostles.

Their design and contents.

FIRST
CENTURY.

they had obtained. Hence, with few and unimportant exceptions, the whole of the volume is (as we have observed) devoted to the history of the Church of Jerusalem, the acceptance of the Gentiles, the conversion, life, and travels of St. Paul; not to any general review of apostolic labours, or record of that unwearied zeal which conveyed the knowledge of the true God to heathen lands.

Propagation
of Chris-
tianity.

Clement.

The British
Church.

From this absence of direct reference to the early extension of the Church, some doubt arises as to the real amount of its progress during the earlier part of the first century. At its close, however, we become enabled to define this progress with more certainty: there is good proof that it had then extended, not only to a great part of Asia, and the north of Africa, but that the voice of truth had been heard in Greece, Italy, France, and in the remoter Spain. Clement, bishop of Rome, who conversed with the apostles, informs the Corinthians in his epistle^a to them, that St. Paul himself had "travelled to the utmost bounds of the west;" an expression from which many have concluded, that he founded the Church in Britain: and we may observe, that indirect evidence tends to confirm the belief, and to shew the extent of that apostolic zeal which surmounted the perils of the distant journey, to convey to an island, situated, as it were, at the extremities of the earth^b, the knowledge and faith of Christ.

The progress of the gospel is adverted to by the early fathers as if they were describing a stream

^a Clemens Rom. ad Corinth., lib. I. iii. 13.

^b "..... Ultimos
Orbis Britannos."—Horace, I. xxxv. 30.

"Penitus toto divisos orbe Britannos."—Virgil, Ecloga I.

whose course flowed upwards, or a vessel which sailed on the waters, with outspread canvas, against wind and tide, and every countervailing force^c. Jewish and pagan hostility were alike directed against a religion which, strictly exclusive in its claims, could only be established upon the ruins of existing superstitions. It was a system adverse to every hope, or passion, or prejudice of the Jew; its doctrines, its principles were entirely subversive of his expectations. Nor was it likely to find more favour with the heathen. It was not, as has been justly observed, a system which might be held without questioning the reality of others; but, uncompromising in its tenets, it boldly denounced the idolatries of Greece and Rome, attacked the strongholds of pagan error, and claimed an authority at once exclusive and divine^d.

FIRST
CENTURY.

Opposition
to the pro-
gress of the
Church;
its cause.

Hence we are not surprised that history records ten persecutions, of greater or less violence, previous to the conversion of Constantine, A.D. 320. The first of these, under Nero, in the year 65, was distinguished by the martyrdom of St. Peter and St. Paul, at Rome. "They departed out of this world," exclaims Clement, in recording this event, "and went unto their holy place; being become a most eminent pattern of patience to all ages^e." Tradition informs us that their bodies were conveyed by weeping disciples to those "subterranean labyrinths, where, through many ages of oppression, the persecuted Church found refuge for the living and sepulchres for the dead^f;" but "their name liveth for evermore;" and their memories are revered, as the great teachers of uni-

1st per-
secution,
A. D. 65.

Martyrdom
of SS. Peter
and Paul.

^c Lyall's *Propædia Prophetica*, Lect. viii. p. 129.

^d Paley, *Evid. of Christianity*, c. i.

^e Clem. Rom. ad Cor. iii. 15.

^f Conybeare and Howson's *Life of St. Paul*, vol. ii. pp. 504, 505.

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CENTURY.

versal redemption, wheresoever the holy Church throughout all the world doth acknowledge God.

2nd per-
secution,
A. D. 94.

This persecution was, after the lapse of a few years, followed by that of Domitian, in the year A.D. 94.

St. John.

Tertullian relates that St. John was by command of this emperor thrown into a cauldron of boiling oil, from which he was miraculously preserved unhurt^s.

Destruction
of Jeru-
salem.

In the interval between these two persecutions, Jerusalem had been destroyed by Titus, A.D. 70, and the Holy Land subjected to an intensity of suffering unparalleled in the history of any other nation. By the entire overthrow of the city, and the slaughter or dispersion of its inhabitants, the "sacrifice and oblation," as foretold by the prophet, "was made to cease;" and amid the general destruction, the vessels of the temple were alone reserved, to adorn the triumph of the Roman conqueror. The antiquary may still trace, among the mouldering bas-reliefs of the Arch of Titus, representations of the golden table and candlestick, of the censers and silver trumpets, and even the procession of captive Jews^h.

The apos-
tolic fathers.

We derive our chief information as to the principles of the early Church from the writings of Clement, Barnabas, Hermas, Ignatius of Antioch, and Polycarp; who, from their converse with the apostles, have acquired the venerable name of the apostolic fathers. Although it may hardly be disputed that their epistles have had in a few places interpolated passages introduced by the perverse zeal of a later age, there is, upon the whole, no reason to question either their genuineness or antiquity. They deserve a far greater share of attention than is generally directed to their

^s Tertullian, *Præsc. Hæc.*

^h Milman's *Hist. Jud.*, vol. iii. p. 72.

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CENTURY.

perusal, as witnesses of apostolic belief and practice. That of Clement, addressed to the Corinthians, shortly after the death of St. Paul, is especially valuable, as containing most important evidence of the earliest forms of Church government, and exhortations worthy of the fellow-labourer of the apostles. The writings attributed to Hermas and Barnabas appear to have suffered much from interpolations, and consequently possess an inferior authority. Those of Ignatius and Polycarp are, on the other hand, remarkable for the value of the information they convey, and for the spirit of earnest piety and zeal by which their pages are inspired. We shall at a later period be led to enquire into the amount of credence and respect due to the opinions of the fathers,—for the present, it is sufficient for our purpose to receive them on the ordinary rules of historical testimony; and by these rules we must be guided, when we would correctly ascertain the doctrines and discipline of primitive Christianity¹. In this enquiry, attention will naturally be first directed to the nature of those positive institutions, which were ordained for the government of the Church either by divine or human authority. Our limited space will not allow its gratification with that fulness merited by the interest of the subject; we shall therefore content ourselves by a brief enquiry into one of its most important branches,—the constitution of the Christian priesthood.

Authority
of early
writings.

That injunction of our Lord, which is recorded by St. Matthew, “to evangelize and baptize all nations^k,” was addressed to the twelve apostles, whom “He

The apos-
tolic com-
mission.

¹ Faber on the Primitive Doctrine, &c., bk. I. c. xii. p. 191, sqq.

^k St. Matt. xxviii. 19.

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CENTURY.

Its ordinary
powers de-
signed to be
perpetual.

Election of
Matthias.

Nature of
apostolical
succession.

had chosen to be with Him," and who were to be, after His ascension, the witnesses of the faith and the governors of the Church¹. He appointed other "seventy also^m," whose office was clearly of a distinct and temporary character. But the very terms of the commission given to the apostles, and the nature of those gifts imparted to them for its fulfilment, prove that their office, on the other hand, was to be delegated to successorsⁿ. This view was embraced by themselves, and they soon afterwards acted upon their conviction. We are informed that after the apostacy of Judas, Peter "stood up in the midst of the disciples," and after explaining its accordance with an express prophecy, insisted upon the duty of appointing a successor to the office of Judas^o, upon the ground that it was further written, "his bishopric let another take^p." The result, as we need hardly say, was the election of Matthias.

We would not be understood to deduce from this fact the perpetual succession of a ministry possessed of the miraculous powers of the apostles. Those powers were given for the establishment of Christianity, and withdrawn when the purpose of their bestowal was accomplished. But that the apostles were, with this exception, to transmit, and did transmit, their authority as the governors of the Church to faithful men, "who should be able to teach others also," is a fact incontestably proved by the evidence of Scripture, and the unanimous voice of catholic antiquity^q.

¹ Boyd on Episcopacy; Pollock's Lectures. ^m Luke x. 1.

ⁿ "Claims of the Church considered." Ed. Lond. 1831.

^o Acts i. 15, 16.

^p Acts i. 20.

^q Boyd; Wordsworth's Theophilus Anglicanus; Stillingfleet's Origines Sacræ.

Shortly after the election of Matthias followed the institution of the order of deacons^r. Their office, at first confined to the administration of temporal, was soon afterwards extended to that of spiritual, things^s; and they formed permanently the third and lowest rank of the ministry. The second was that of elders, or presbyters, whose appointment seems to have shortly followed that of the diaconate; when, we read, the apostles "ordained them elders in every Church^t." The first and highest remained for some time that of the apostles, to whom had been entrusted the "care of all the Churches," and whose authority in their government was recognised as supreme. But since it was needful that on their decease, the authority which they had received should be transmitted to successors, an elder with superior authority was appointed in every city, who might secure to the Church, when deprived of apostolic superintendence, the advantages which ever flow from a regular and authorized government^u. Thus Timothy at Ephesus, and Titus at Crete, were appointed by St. Paul to jurisdiction over the other elders^x. We learn its character from the Epistles which he addressed to them; it included the ordination of presbyters, the power of rebuke and of general supervision, and the rejection of an heretic after fitting admonition. Thus by the institution of episcopacy was completed that threefold gradation of the ministry, into bishops, priests, and deacons, which has ever since been perpetuated in the Church^y.

FIRST
CENTURY.

Institution
of the order
of deacons.

Of elders or
presbyters.

Of bishops.

Their au-
thority.

As far as we have hitherto considered the subject, Nature of the evidence.

^r Acts vi. 6.

^s Acts xxi. 8.

^t Acts xiv. 23.

^u Pollock, Lect. i. p. 27.

^x 1 Tim. iii. 14, 15, v. 17; Titus i. 5, iii. 10.

^y Stillingfleet; Bingham; Origines Ecclesiasticas.

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CENTURY.

we have been guided wholly by the internal evidence of Scripture. But, as was before observed, the enquiry, whether the character of the Christian priesthood remained long unaltered, and whether it was, or was not, regarded as essential to the nature of the Church, can be only satisfied by the testimony of primitive tradition. Let us open the Epistle of Clemens Romanus to the Corinthians.

Testimony
of Clement.

"The apostles," he saith, "having preached through countries and cities, appointed the first-fruits of their conversions to be bishops and ministers over such as should afterwards believe, having first proved them by the Spirit^a." "Blessed are those priests who, having finished their course before these times, have obtained a fruitful and perfect dissolution^a."

To the same purpose Polycarp:—

Of Polycarp.

"Being subject to the priests and deacons^b."

And Ignatius, whose Epistles are full in their references to the subject:—

Of Ignatius.

"Let us take heed therefore that we do not set ourselves against the bishop^c."

"Your most worthy bishop, and the well-wrought spiritual crown of your presbytery; and your deacons, which are according to God^d." "Without these there is no Church^e." "For as many as are of God, and of Jesus Christ, are also with their bishop. . . . Let no one follow him that makes a schism in the Church; . . . For there is but one flesh of our Lord Jesus Christ, and one cup in the unity of His Blood; one altar; as also there is one bishop, together with his presbytery, and the deacons, my fellow-servants^f."

^a Clem. Rom. ad Corinth., Ep. I. c. 18. v. 4.

^a Ep. I. xviii. 20.

^b Polycarp ad Phil. ii. 13.

^c Ignatius ad Eph. ii. 3.

^d Ad Magnesios, iv. 5.

^e Ad Trallianos, i. 9.

^f Ignatius ad Philadel., c. i.

The necessity of a settled form of government was much increased by the gradual spread of heresies; which had attained considerable prevalence during the lifetime of the apostles themselves. The doctrines of the Gnostics, Docetæ, and Cerinthians, were even then so widely extended, that St. John wrote his Gospel and Epistles to confute their errors; and we find in nearly all the apostolical writings, allusions to one or other of the various forms which they assumed. Nor will this excite our surprise, when we consider the innumerable modifications of heathen and philosophical belief which then prevailed. It was only a reasonable expectation, that, as Christianity extended itself through the remotest provinces of the Roman empire, its purity would to some degree become corrupted by human ignorance and perversity^s. Thus it will become our office to record, at a somewhat later period, the rise and progress of heresies so dangerous in character, and general in prevalence, as to threaten the disorganization and overthrow of the Church. Our attention will be first directed to Gnosticism, and the systems of erroneous belief directly or indirectly connected with it.

FIRST
CENTURY.

Rise of
heresies.

Their cause.

Their ex-
tent.

^s Conybeare and Howson's *Life of St. Paul*. Waddington's *Church History*, c. v. p. 58.

THE SECOND CENTURY.

Review of
persecu-
tions.

That of
Trajan.

Not only was the Church oppressed by internal errors and divisions,—she had also to withstand the continual assaults of paganism. Persecutions followed each other in rapid succession. The first, as we have already observed, had been distinguished by the martyrdom, at Rome, of those two great apostles, whose life was spent in the propagation of the faith, and whose blood was shed in its defence and vindication. We gather from indirect testimony, that this persecution, although, perhaps, it did not extend throughout the empire, was most destructive in its operation, and attended by circumstances of unusual barbarity. About thirty years had elapsed before the peace of the Church was again seriously interrupted, by the enmity of Domitian, A.D. 94. At the beginning of the second century, the influence of Trajan was directed to the subversion of the faith. It had now gained such considerable progress as to arouse the alarm, and provoke the active hostility, of declining paganism. That system, itself destitute of the elements which secure stability, and bending beneath the weight of its own corruptions, seemed resolved to make one vigorous and final effort to destroy the new religion. Difficult as it confessedly is to ascertain the exact amount of suffering experienced by the Christians, either from the deliberate and organized persecutions of the state, or the continual outbreaks of popular fury, pagan and Christian testimonies alike

combine to inform us that it was very great. As Tacitus^b had formerly recorded, with but little humanity, the barbarities of the first persecution, the second found an historian in Pliny, the governor of Pontus and Bithynia, from whose Epistle we learn the unjust and inconsistent principles which directed the persecution of the Christians. This letter, to which we shall hereafter have occasion to refer more fully, was written to Trajan from Bithynia, in which province, as indeed throughout the East, the progress of the faith had been inconceivably rapid. Pliny, desirous to check what he calls this "infectious superstition," addressed the emperor, requesting his advice in the difficult circumstances of his position¹. The reply of Trajan virtually was, "that the Christians are not to be sought for, or prosecuted on anonymous information; but if convicted, they are to be punished." Tertullian exposed with force and reason the iniquitous nature of such a rescript. "If Christians," he exclaimed, "deserve condemnation, they should be sought after; if not sought after, they should not be condemned^k." It will not, however, surprise us, that the objection of the Christian apologist, founded, as it was, on the first principles of justice, should have availed but little against the sophistry of heathenism. That religion which was afterwards destined to command the homage of the Cæsars, was exposed to perpetual assaults for nearly two more centuries; and the worship of Christ, soon to be embraced by the most distant kingdoms, was still,

SECOND
CENTURY.The letter
of Pliny.The answer,
of Trajan.^b Taciti Annal., xv. 44.¹ A.D. 107.^k "Si damnas, cur non et inquiris? si non inquiris, cur non et absolvis?" Tertull. Apol. c. 3.

SECOND
CENTURY,

The perse-
cution of
Marcus
Antoninus.

Its cha-
racter.

in the first city of the world, celebrated within the dark and sepulchral recesses of the catacombs. The persecution of Marcus Antoninus, which followed quick upon that of Trajan, was neither less extensive nor less severe than its predecessors. On the other hand, it appears probable¹, from historical testimony, that it was conducted upon more deliberate principles, and obtained a wider circle of operation, than either those of Domitian, Nero, or even Trajan. From recording this, the last and perhaps most violent, oppression of the Church during the first two centuries, it would be a pleasurable task to turn to a recital of her triumphs, and a review of her conquests. We must, however, before we gratify this wish, briefly recount the touching circumstances attending the martyrdom of the two apostolic fathers, Ignatius and Polycarp.

St. Chrysostom informs us, that, upon the death of Euodius, the first bishop of Antioch, the metropolis of Syria, Ignatius was chosen as his successor by the apostles, and from them received imposition of hands. The Church in that city, which had been founded by St. Paul and St. Barnabas, and was distinguished by the circumstance that "the disciples were there first called Christians^m," was for more than thirty years enlarged by his zeal and directed by his wisdom. But the time drew near when it was to be deprived of both. Trajan, passing through Antioch, on his way to Armenia, commanded the venerable bishop to be summoned; and on his indignant refusal to renounce his Lord, he was condemned to be taken to Rome, and exposed to wild beasts in the amphitheatre. On his voyage to Italy he wrote seven

The mar-
tyrdom of
Ignatius,
A. D. 107.

¹ Vide Waddington, c. iv. p. 47.

^m Acts xi. 26.

Epistles, by which to confirm the faith and endurance of the persecuted Churches. At Rome he was, "with all haste," says his biographer, "led into the amphitheatre, and delivered to the cruel beasts, near the temple, by wicked men; that so his desire might be accomplished; as it is written, 'the desire of the righteous is acceptable.'"

Polycarp, who, like this eminent martyr, had been the disciple of St. John, was by that apostle appointed bishop of Smyrna. In the year 107, he was visited by Ignatius, who, then on his way to martyrdom, commended the see of Antioch, deprived of his own guidance, to that of his fellow-bishop. Polycarp sorrowfully accepted the trust; and the Eastern Churches were long edified by the purity of his life and doctrine. At one time he visited Rome, in order to confer with Anicetus, the bishop of that city, on the observance of Easter, concerning which a controversy had arisen; at another, the heresy of Marcion was encountered and confuted by his zeal for the integrity of the faith. At length, in the year 167, a great persecution arose under Marcus Aurelius; and the aged bishop was condemned to be burnt alive. Few passages of history are more touching than those which record his martyrdom, in the letter of the Smyrnæan Church^o. His last prayer is deservedly considered so beautiful, that we shall be pardoned for transcribing it:—

"O Lord God Almighty, the Father of Thy beloved and blessed Son, Jesus Christ, through whom we have attained a knowledge of Thee; the God of angels and powers, and of all creation, and of all the

SECOND
CENTURY.

Death of
Polycarp,
A. D. 167.

His last
prayer.

* Vide Hook's Eccl. Biograph., vol. vi. p. 245.
• Epist. Eccl. Smyrn. ad Philomeliā; Euseb. iv. 15.

SECOND
CENTURY.

just who live in Thy presence! I bless Thee that Thou hast vouchsafed to bring me to this day and this hour; that I may have part in the number of Thy martyrs in the cup of Christ, for the resurrection, both of soul and body, unto life eternal, in the incorruption of the Holy Ghost. . . . I praise Thee for all these things, I bless, I glorify Thee, by the eternal High Priest, Jesus Christ, Thy beloved Son ^p."

The growth
of Chris-
tianity.

It has been justly said, that "the blood of the martyrs became the seed of the Church." Pliny, at the very beginning of this century, had represented to Trajan, with anxiety and alarm, the continual pro-

Expressions
of Pliny.

gress of Christianity. "The contagion of this superstition," he exclaimed, "has not seized cities only, but towns also, and the open country." From his complaint that there "had been in Bithynia, for a long time, an intermission of all the heathen solemnities, and that the sacrifices to the gods had almost ceased," we may readily infer the rapid propagation of the faith in that province; nor is there any reason to suppose it less general in the other parts of the

And of
the early
fathers.

empire ^q. While, on the one hand, this propagation struck dismay into the heart of the pagan, it afforded to the Christian, on the other, the most triumphant argument for the divine origin of his religion; and the early fathers regarded with mingled joy and wonder the rapid fulfilment of those prophecies which had predicted its future triumphs ^r. "There is no race of mankind," says Justin Martyr to Trypho the

Statement
of Justin.

^p There is difference of opinion as to the date of Polycarp's martyrdom. We have followed the opinion of Tillemont, Lardner, Usher, and others.

^q Paley's Evidences, pt. II. c. ix. p. 110.

^r Vide Lyall's Prop. Prophetic., Dissertation i., on the Propagation of Christianity.

Jew^s, "whether of Greeks or barbarians, or of any other name, whether of those who wander in tribes, without fixed habitation, or tend their flocks in tents^t, among whom prayers and thanksgivings are not offered up to the Creator of the universe, in the name of the crucified Jesus." "All other kingdoms," says Tertullian^u, writing a few years later than Justin, "as of Pharaoh, or Alexander, or of the Assyrians, or even of the Romans, is limited and defined; but the kingdom of Christ, and His name, reaches everywhere, is believed everywhere, reigns everywhere, and is everywhere adored." "This prediction," he says^x to the Jews, "you see even now fulfilled in the successful preaching of the gospel; 'its sound has gone out into all lands, and its words into the ends of the world:' for in whom else have all the nations believed, save in Christ, who now hath come?"

SECOND
CENTURY.

Argument
of Ter-
tullian.

It is a fact worthy of observation, that the Church, from the very earliest period, gained most influence in those large and populous cities which formed the centres of commerce and civilization. Alexandria was visited by St. Mark himself, who founded Churches there, and, as Eusebius informs us^y, became its first bishop. The varied character of its inhabitants, the ardour with which they cultivated knowledge, and, perhaps, above all, the extensive circulation of the Septuagint among the Jews, who were there very numerous, prepared the way for the successful preaching of the Evangelist, and the holy guidance of his successors. We have already seen that the important and flourish-

Spread of
Christianity
in the cities.

Alexandria.

^o Justin Martyr ad Tryphonem, sect. 117.

^t Ἡ ἀμαξοβίων, ἡ δόικων, ἡ ἐν σκήναις κτηνοτρόφων οἰκούντων.

^u Tertull. Apol., c. 38.

^x Tertull. adv. Jud., c. 7.

^y Eusebii Hist. Eccl., l. ii. c. 16 and 24.

SECOND
CENTURY.Antioch.
Athens and
Corinth.

Rome.

Progress of
the Church
in remote
countries.Contrast
between
paganism
and Chris-
tianity.

ing Church of Antioch had been early committed by apostolic hands to the care of Ignatius. The Churches of Athens and Corinth, at first corrupted by the "vain philosophy," and distracted by the contending theories, of Grecian polytheism^a, appear to have increased, during this century, both in their converts and in their internal discipline. Nor does the faith of the Roman Church, which St. Paul^a had declared "was spoken of throughout the world," appear to have declined after his martyrdom. Irenæus informs us that Clement, of whose Epistle to the Corinthians we have before made mention, was the third bishop of the city, then the metropolis of the world. He succeeded Linus and Anacletus, who had been appointed by the joint commission of St. Peter and St. Paul.

The progress of Christianity in remote districts was, as may be anticipated, less rapid than in these large cities of the empire. Thus we find that even long after the conversion of Constantine in the fourth century, heathen superstitions still maintained a precarious tenure in distant and retired villages. From this circumstance originated the name of "paganism^b." But in general, the rapidity with which the religion spread was so great as to confound its opponents, and afford to its advocates a firm assurance that the belief which could thus surmount every obstacle suggested by human perversity, could not but be divine^c.

Nor was this assurance lessened when the Christian apologist proceeded justly to contrast the absurd

^a Dionys. apud Euseb. iv. 23.^b From *pagus*, a village.^a Rom. i. 8.^c Vide Justin Martyr adv. Tryph.

legends and innumerable variations of heathenism with the unity of the Catholic Church. "This," says Irenæus, "the Church, though scattered throughout the world, diligently observes; and although there are in the world various languages, yet the authority of tradition is everywhere one and the same^d." He then asserts, as a proof of this, the identity of faith and practice prevailing, not only throughout the East, but in the most distant Churches of Germany, and Gaul, and Spain; alike in the sterile deserts of the Thebaid, and along the remote and barren coasts of Africa.

SECOND
CENTURY.

Did we need an illustration of this fact, we could find few more conclusive than that afforded by Irenæus himself, whose labours conduced so greatly to secure unity and soundness of faith in the far West. He was born in Greece, probably about A.D. 140^e; but in early life left that country, in order to co-operate with Pothinus, bishop of Lyons, by whose exertions Christianity had been established in the south of France^f. Upon the martyrdom of the latter, at the age of ninety, Irenæus succeeded him in the bishopric, with which (as Eusebius tells us) was connected, to some extent, the primacy of Gaul. By his learning and indefatigable zeal, he gained the title of "the light of the western Churches." Nor did he confine his attention to the establishment of the truth; but, viewing with sorrow the danger to which it was exposed, from the prevalence of Gnosticism, he thought it ill befitting a Christian bishop to behold without emotion, or any attempt to restore sound doctrine,

His oppo-
sition to
heresies.

^d Irenæus, lib. i. c. 10.

^e Dupin and Massuet. Tillemont places it in about A.D. 120.

^f Gregory of Tours; Hist. Franc., lib. i. c. 29.

**SECOND
CENTURY.**

His conference with Victor.

His martyrdom.

Justin Martyr.

He becomes a Platonist.

the desolations of the Church of God. Hence he became the zealous combatant of heresy^s. And while he resisted the errors of Marcionite philosophy, he did not omit to uphold^h the internal independence of the Church against the arrogance of Victor, bishop of Rome; who, having enjoined upon the Asiatics that observance of Easter prevalent throughout the West, had, upon their refusal to comply, declared them cut off from the unity of Christians. Our attention will be soon more fully directed to this controversy. Tradition^l records that Irenæus, after unwearied labours in promoting the knowledge of Christ, died a

martyr during the persecution of Severus.

The most celebrated of the early Apologies for Christianity are those which were addressed by Justin Martyr to the Emperor Antoninus Pius. Justin was probably^k born at the beginning of the second century. His dialogue with Trypho informs us that he employed his early years in diligent enquiries after truth^l, and was attracted by the apparent splendours of Grecian philosophy. He was, however, soon distracted amid the conflicting theories of the Peripatetic and Pythagorean schools, and became a decided Platonist. "On what teacher," he now exclaimed, "can we rely, or to what quarter can we look for aid, if these are not the doctrines that contain the truth^m?" But he appears to have been, in reality, dissatisfied; his mind even now continually longed for doctrines more consolatory, and truth established upon surer evidences. At this crisis he was directed by a vene-

^s Irenæus, *Præf. ad lib. i.*

^h Euseb. *Hist. Eccl.*, l. v. c. 24.

^l Martyr, *Rom. ad Jun.* 28. Vide Cave's *Lives*.

^k Eusebius, l. ii. c. 13.

^l *Apol. ii.* s. 13.

^m *Dial. c. Tryphonem*, c. 7. p. 109.

rable Christian^a to the study of the prophecies, and the consideration of their fulfilment in the person of Christ. His enquiries produced conviction; and he found in the communion of the Church that peace which he had hitherto been unable to attain. Determined to devote the remainder of his life to the promulgation of those divine truths, in the adoption of which his own mind had found repose, he visited, for that purpose, the shores of Asia, the deserts of upper Egypt, and even Europe. At Rome he wrote his first Apology^o, a work extremely valuable both in ancient and modern times; not only as confuting paganism, but also, and more especially, as conveying valuable information as to the doctrines and discipline of the primitive believers; their assembling for divine worship on the first day of the week, or "Lord's Day;" and the administration of baptism and the holy Eucharist. The second Apology, written some years later, has not been preserved to us entire. Justin at length^p was called to suffer martyrdom; and by the constancy of his endurance under the last infliction, bore the highest testimony to his firmness in the faith of Christ. "We wish nothing more," said he, "than to suffer for our Lord Jesus Christ; for this will give us salvation and joy at His awful tribunal, before which all the universe must appear^q."

SECOND CENTURY.

But subsequently embraces Christianity.

His first Apology.

His second Apology.

His martyrdom.

It remains that we should briefly glance at the nature of the controversy on the observance of Easter, which, as we have already seen, disturbed, during this century, the internal peace of the Church; and the

Concluding remarks.

^a Idem, s. 8.

^o Apol. i s. 26.

^p In the year 165, according to the Alexandrine Chronicle; (ad ann. 2. Olymp. 236).

^q For a more detailed account, vide Cave's Life of Justin, and Hook's Biogr. Eccl., vol. vi. p. 373.

**SECOND
CENTURY.**

extent of those destructive heresies which perpetually attacked her from without. However unwelcome may be the task of turning from a contemplation of the fortitude of martyrs, to that of errors and divisions, it is one which prudence and fidelity alike impose on every historian.

**Controversy
about
Easter.**

The Asiatic Christians observed the paschal feast on the day on which the Jews celebrated their passover, —the fourteenth day of the first Jewish month; and commemorated the resurrection on the third day from that time, without regard to the day of the week on which it might fall. Those of the West confined their celebration of that event to the first day of the week, and kept the paschal feast on the night preceding.

**Different
celebra-
tions.****Efforts for
unity.**

Many inconveniences arose from this diversity of practice; and we have already seen that Polycarp had, about A.D. 150, visited Rome, in order to confer with Anicetus on the propriety of establishing a rule of universal observance^r. His efforts were not, however, successful; and the Churches of the East and West mutually agreed to preserve their distinct celebrations of the festival. But about the year 196^s,

**Letter of
Victor.**

Victor, the successor of Anicetus, addressed an epistle to the Asiatics, requiring their conformity to that usage which had invariably prevailed in the Western Church. The tone in which the demand was made appears to have been peremptory and aggressive. Owing to this circumstance, many historians have taken unnecessary labour to define with exact precision the character of the authority then possessed by the see of Rome. For it may be safely conceded that the bishop of that city, superior to the rest of

**Its cha-
racter.****Its au-
thority.**

^r Vide Euseb. Hist. Eccl., l. v. c. 23.

^s Fleury, l. 5. c. 44.

his brethren as he undoubtedly was in the number of his spiritual subjects, exerted no inconsiderable influence at a very early period^t. This naturally resulted from the temporal power of Rome, and her position as metropolis of the world^u. But, on the other hand, it is indisputable that her bishops for many centuries neither claimed nor possessed any definite authority over other Churches^x. The injunctions of the haughty Victor were but little regarded. The Eastern Church convoked a synod, which in temperate but decided language^y refused to recognise any foreign dictation. Irenæus addressed^z to Victor, from Lyons, a letter of firm remonstrance, in which he exhorted him to imitate that humility and moderation which had distinguished his predecessor Anicetus^a. Victor appears to have yielded; the peace of the Church was but slightly disturbed by the controversy during the following century; and the Council of Nice shortly afterwards established an universal observance.

SECOND
CENTURY.

And effects.

Opposition
presented.Close of
the con-
troversy.

There are few subjects in ecclesiastical history more perplexing to the historian than the heresies of the early Church. Their forms and modifications were innumerable; most were distinguished by extreme absurdities, all by their great obscurity; the arguments used to support them were generally tedious and unprofitable; and the information which we possess concerning them is both partial and defective. Hence our notice of them will be short.

Gnosticism, under the general title of which most of them may be included^b, is derived from a Greek

Gnostic
heresies.

^t Dionys. Corinth. ad Romanos (given in Euseb. iv. 23).

^u Waddington's Ch. Hist., p. 14.

^x Vid. Gorham's "Ante-Nicene Church."

^y Synodicon Edit. Argent., 1601 p. 7.

^z Vide Le Clerc, Hist. Eccl. ad ann. 76.

^a Le Clerc, vol. i. p. 800.

^b Eusebius, l. v. c. 24.

SECOND
CENTURY.Their di-
visions.

And effects.

Their cha-
racter.

word, signifying knowledge; and appears to have originated in vain enquiries into the origin of evil^c. It was distinguished by the maintenance of two principles, evil and good. The God of the Jews was the evil principle; Jesus Christ an ambassador of the good, sent down for the benefit of the human race. The Cerinthians^d denied the divinity of Christ; the Phantastics, or Docetæ^e, His perfect humanity, and the reality of His sufferings. The Gnostics generally rejected the inspiration of the Old Testament. They disputed the resurrection of the body, and the final judgment, and the doctrine of Atonement. These errors conducted the Carpocratian heretics to the most deliberate immoralities^f; the Essenes^g to a profession of strict and monastic austerities. Nor are they in themselves worthy, as Le Clerc has justly observed, of any attentive consideration; their importance is wholly attributable to the fact, that they are condemned by the Scriptures^h and the early fathersⁱ.

^c Waddington's *Hist. of the Church*, p. 62. c. 5. Burton's *Bampton Lectures*.

^d Or Nicolaitans; mentioned in *Rev. ii. 6, 15*.

^e St. Jerome *advers. Lucif.* XXIII. ii. 197.

^f Euseb., l. iv. c. 7. Vide *Bampton Lect.*, (Burton).

^g Founded by Tatian, A.D. 172.

^h Col. ii. 8; 1 Tim. i. 4; Titus iii. 9; 1 John ii. 18.

ⁱ For fuller information on the Gnostic heresies, consult Burton's *Bampton Lectures*, Mosheim's *Ch. Hist.*, Waddington, c. v., and the *Encycl. Brit.*, p. 24, sqq.

THE THIRD CENTURY.

CHRISTIANITY had from the earliest times gained great progress in Africa. The preaching of St. Mark had established the Church of Alexandria, soon to become famous for the number of its members and the extent of its influence; while Abyssinia had been converted by the miracles and apostolical zeal of St. Thomas, whose labours, as tradition informs us, were fruitful in India^k itself; and whose grave is still pointed out on the distant shores of Coromandel^l. The faith took vigorous root in the north of Africa^m; the Church of Carthage was especially distinguished by the eminence of its teachers, the genius of Tertullian, and the piety of Cyprian; while the neighbouring town of Hippo became, at the beginning of the fifth century, the residence of the great Augustine. For upwards of four centuries the Church conquered and prevailed, from the confines of Egypt to the Western Straits; until the Vandal irruption broke out with desolating violence, and left the barren coasts of Africa uncheered by the light of Christian truth.

Tertullian was born about the year 150. Jerome recordsⁿ that he was of a "sharp and violent temper;" his abilities were, however, great; and the cause of

^k Euseb., l. iii. c. 1, quoted in Nelson's *Fasts and Fests*, p. 53; and Brerewood's *Enquiry*, c. 20.

^l See the first note, p. 119, of Grotius *de Veritate*.

^m Bishop Kaye on Tertullian, p. 92.

ⁿ Jerom. *Catal. Script. Ecclesiast.*

THIRD
CENTURY.

Christianity derived much benefit from his valuable and laborious writings; especially from his Apology, written about the year 200, and directed against the absurdities of heathenism. He fell, however, shortly afterwards, into the Montanist heresy; and is supposed to have died about the year 220°. But these dates, as Bishop Kaye has observed, rest almost entirely on conjecture.

Cyprian.

Cyprian, whose labours were also bestowed in Carthage, and whose character was distinguished by that firmness and consistency in which Tertullian was unhappily defective, was converted to the faith^p in the year 246; and two years^q afterwards, by the unanimous consent of clergy and laity, raised to the episcopal throne. Immediately after his elevation, he directed his attention to the restoration of discipline in the Church, which had become relaxed under the rule of his predecessor Donatus. A violent persecution shortly afterwards arose under Decius; the Church of Carthage was exposed to the sword of the heathen, and Cyprian was compelled for a time to retire from the city. But although absent in body, he was in spirit ever present with his flock; so that their faith was strengthened and their constancy secured by his intercessions, and by the frequent letters of exhortation which he addressed to them. On his return from exile, he found that Novatus, a presbyter, had fomented a schism during his absence, and withdrawn his followers from the communion of the Church; and it was long before unity was permanently restored. The violence of persecution was at

Persecution
of the
Church of
Carthage.

Schism of
Novatus.

° On these dates, vide Allix and Bp. Kaye.
Vit. Cypriani, p. 3.

^p Pont. Diac. in
^q Cypr. Epist. lix. ad Cornelium, p. 130.

this time so great, that many Christians, from fear of death, lapsed into heathenism; and hence a dispute arose, how such persons should, upon their repentance, be re-admitted into the fellowship of the brethren. In the solution of this case Cyprian appears to have taken a prominent part. Another important question which then agitated the Church regarded the re-baptization of heretics. While one party, at the head of which^r was Stephen, bishop of Rome, strenuously maintained^s the validity of heretical baptism, another, to which Cyprian gave the weight of his influence, held the necessity of a subsequent baptism, considering the first to be null and invalid. Cyprian called a council of eighty-five bishops, at which, without one dissentient voice^t, the latter doctrine was declared to be that of the African Church; a decision which has in later ages greatly perplexed the advocates of papal infallibility. The question was one which, although it may at first sight appear of slight, or merely local, importance, did in truth affect materially the discipline of the Church and the efficacy of her ordinances^u. Deeply impressed with this conviction, Cyprian did not cease to oppose with firmness the errors of the Bishop of Rome, and the dangerous laxity of Novatian^x. His treatises record the opinions of Christian antiquity on many important points.

THIRD
CENTURY.Dispute
as to the
lapsed.And re-bap-
tization of
heretics.Council of
Carthage.Opinions of
Cyprian.

“To consent,” he declares, “to the validity of the baptism of heretics, is in fact to approve of it. For in this case, either all or none is validly performed. If the heretic could baptize, he could also give the

^r Firmil. Epist. ad Cypr. Ep. 75. p. 229. ^s Stephani Epist. 72. p. 196.
^t Apud Cypr., p. 229, et Concil. v. i. p. 508.
^u Vide Hook's Life of Cyprian. ^x Ad Pompeium Epist. 74. p. 210.

THIRD
CENTURY.

Holy Ghost. But if he who is without the Church cannot give the Spirit, because he himself hath not the Spirit, neither can he baptize the convert; for there is one baptism, and one Holy Spirit, and one Church, founded by the Lord Christ."

Increase of
episcopal
influence.

Its origin.

The epis-
copal office;
how con-
sidered by
the early
Church.

Argument of
Tertullian.

We have observed that Cyprian summoned a synod of bishops to decide the dispute. It is certain that about this time the episcopal order obtained more power than it had ever before enjoyed; this is perhaps attributable to the circumstance that provincial councils were now summoned with great regularity, and that the authority of the assembled bishops was exercised in promulgating canons for the government of the Church. Some historians¹ have attributed this change to the influence of Cyprian; but it seems more reasonable to refer it to the operation of gradual causes. We have already seen that the order of bishops was considered by the apostolic fathers, and in the earliest times, as essential to the very nature of a pure Church; and an unbroken chain of testimony connects their evidence with that of the age of Cyprian. "From the Churches founded by the apostles," Tertullian² had said, a few years before, "others were propagated, and continue to be propagated at the present day; which are all reckoned in the number of apostolic Churches. Moreover, all these Churches constitute but one Church, being joined together in the unity of the faith and in the bond of peace." . . . "Now," he continues, "let the heretics shew the origin of their Churches; let them trace the succession of their bishops, and thus connect

¹ Mosheim, Gen. Hist. c. iii. p. 2. ch. 2; vide Waddington's Ch. Hist., p. 36.

² Tertull. de Præscr. Hæret.

the person who first held the office, either with some apostle, or some apostolic man who always remained in communion with the Church. It is thus that the apostolic Churches shew their origin. That of Smyrna traces its bishops in an unbroken line from Polycarp, who was placed there by St. John; that of Rome from Clement, who was placed there by St. Peter; and every other Church can point out the individual to whom the superintendence of its doctrine and discipline was first committed by some one of the apostles."

THIRD
CENTURY.

In the year 257, Cyprian was conducted to martyrdom, by the command of Galerius^a, the proconsul of Africa. An affecting account of his death has been preserved to us in the pages of his deacon, Pontius^b, who, attended by crowds of mourning Christians, followed his beloved master to the last. Thus died Cyprian of Carthage, of whom Cave^c has justly said, "He was a wise and prudent governor, a great assertor of the Church's rights, a resolute patron and defender of the truth, a faithful and vigilant overseer of his flock. . . . His doors were open to all that came; the widow never returned from him empty^c; to any that were blind he would be a guide to direct them; those that were lame he would support; if any were oppressed, he was at hand to rescue and protect them; which things, he was wont to say, they ought to do, who desired to render themselves truly acceptable and dear to God^d."

Martyrdom
of Cyprian.

During the first half of this century, the catechetical

^a Pont. Diac., p. 8.

^b For dates, and account of the martyrdom, vide Cave's *Life of St. Cyprian*, vol. i. p. 390, and Hook's *Biography*.

^c Epist. 49. ad Paulin. v. 4, part ii. p. 567.

^d Cave's *Lives of the Fathers*, vol. i. p. 391.

THIRD CENTURY. schools of Alexandria were raised to eminence by the learning, zeal, and eloquence of Origen. He was called to preside over them at the early age of eighteen, and for nearly thirty years his energies were unceasingly and successfully applied to the extension of the faith. With this object he published an edition of the Scriptures in different languages, and took great care in the collection of correct copies, and the collation of manuscripts. He also attempted to give the interpretation of difficult passages. In the former task he was eminently successful; but in the latter he fell into many errors and absurdities. His opinions were influenced by the philosophic sect called the New Platonics, or Eclectics, shortly before founded by Ammonius Saccas^e, and subsequently adorned by the advocacy of the celebrated Porphyry^f. Its great principle consisted in a profession of whatever was reasonable in different tenets, and the rejection of everything contrary to reason. Those who have witnessed the rapid progress of German rationalism during the last few years, and the very recent revival of a subtle Gnosticism, will be little surprised at the celerity with which the plausible theories of the Eclectic doctrine spread in the Eastern Church. The mind of Origen was deeply attached to philosophic speculations; and, attracted by a system which presented so wide a field for their exercise, he embraced it with eagerness. In his interpretation of Scripture, he applied to the explanation of facts the same system of allegory by which the Platonic school sought to veil, in some degree, the conflicting absurdities of mythology and

Origen.

The Eclectic philosophy.

Its progress.

And effects.

^e Mosheim, c. ii. p. 3 a. 1.

^f Mosheim de Reb. Ch. ante Const., sec. iii. 21.

heathen traditions. His opinions called forth during his lifetime vigorous opposition; and Tillemont has well observed, that he was followed by the same fate after his death as during his life; so that martyrs have made his defence, and martyrs have written his condemnation; and while one party has regarded him as the greatest doctor of the Church, the other has execrated him as the parent of Arius and every other heresiarch^g.

THIRD
CENTURY.

Character
of Origen.

We find that the word "sacrament" was frequently applied by the early fathers to signify any holy rite, whether of divine or human appointment^h. But it was ever held that two ordinances, Baptism and the Eucharist, which Christ had Himself ordained, were possessed of a special efficacy superior to that of all other rites; and, in that limited sense of the word which afterwards prevailed, by which the institution of Christ was considered essential to the nature of a sacrament, these were for many ages the only sacraments of the Church. Of these two only Justin Martyrⁱ makes mention; Tertullian^k likewise joins the two together, and says nothing of any more; while St. Augustine^l, St. Chrysostom^m, and the later fathers, add the weight of their testimony to the same effect.

The sacra-
ments.

Their num-
ber.

With the sacrament of baptism the early Christians universally connected the remission of original sin, the entire regeneration of the baptized, and their translation from the power of darkness to the king-

Baptism;
its effects.

^g Tillemont's *Memoirs*, vol. iii. p. 495, sqq.; vide Waddington's *Hist. of the Ch.*, p. 34.

^h Vide the Homily on Com. Pray. and Sacr., p. 316. Ed. Oxon. 1840.

ⁱ Apol. a cap. 79 ad finem.

^k De Corona, c. 3.

^l De Doctrina Christ., l. iii. c. 9.

^m In Joann. Homil. 85.

THIRD
CENTURY.

dom of Jesus Christ. "We descend into the water," declares Barnabas^o, "full of sins and pollutions, and ascend out of it full of good fruits, having fear in our hearts, and hope towards the Lord in our spirit." "The baptized," says Justin Martyr^p, "are led by us to some place where water is, and are regenerated even as we ourselves were regenerated; for they are then immersed in the water, in the name of the Father, and of our Saviour Jesus Christ, and of the Holy Ghost." And so Theophilus of Antioch^q: "Men are to receive repentance and remission of sins by this water and laver of new birth."

The Lord's
Supper.

The celebration of the Eucharist in the early Church was very frequent; in many places it was administered every day; and liturgies were compiled, for the greater solemnity of the divine offices^r. The

The Agapæ.

institution of Agapæ, or Love-feasts, to which St. Paul alludes in his Epistle to the Corinthians, was for some time continued in the Church; these assemblies appear to have been held immediately after the celebration of the sacrament^s. In process of time, however, they led to corruption, and gradually fell into disuse. The gift bestowed in the Eucharist was held by the primitive Church to be the Real Presence of Christ in the consecrated elements. The language in which the early fathers maintain this belief is, however, incompatible with the notion of transubstantiation; and it is probable, that while they upheld the reality of the Presence, they did not pretend to determine its spiritual nature. "The bread which is

Nature of
the Lord's
Supper.

^o Barnabæ Epist., c. ii.

^p Justin, Apol. i. c. 78.

^q Theoph. ad Autolyc., l. ii. p. 109.

^r Vide Palmer's *Origines Liturgicæ*.

^s Mosheim, l. c.; Hind's *Early Ch.*, v. ii. p. 211; Neander.

from the earth," says Irenæus^t, "after the divine invocation upon it, is no longer common bread, but the Eucharist, consisting of two things; the one earthly, the other heavenly." "The bread," says Tertullian^u, "which our Saviour took and distributed to His disciples, He made His own Body, saying, 'This is My Body;' that is, the figure of My Body." And so, somewhat later, Gelasius^x: "The sacraments of the Body and Blood of Christ are a divine thing, for which reason we become by them partakers of the divine nature; and yet the substance of bread and wine does not cease to exist, and the image and likeness of the Body and Blood of Christ are celebrated in holy mysteries."

THIRD
CENTURY.

Throughout the whole of this century, violent persecutions were directed against the Church by the Roman emperors. Some of these appear to have been general, while others were for the most part confined to some country in particular^y. In the latter class we may justly rank that of Severus, in the year 203, which was raised against the Christians in Egypt. The persecution of Decius, in 250, was, on the other hand, strictly universal, and distinguished by extreme barbarity^z. The bishops of Rome, Alexandria, and Antioch, suffered martyrdom, and Origen himself was exposed to imprisonment and torture^a. The persecution of Valerian, generally considered by historians as the eighth, was destined to try the faith and endurance of the African Church^b; the Chris-

Persecu-
tions.

^t Adv. Hær., lib. iv. c. 34.

^u Ad Marcion., lib. iv. c. 40.

^x Lib. de Daub. Nat. Christ.

^y Vide Mosheim, and Tillemont, Mem., tom. iii.

^z Tillem. v. 3. p. 310.

^a Idem, p. 325—428.

^b Lardner, vol. iii. p. 141.

THIRD
CENTURY.

Propagation
of the
gospel.

tians of Carthage, as we have already seen, were especially oppressed during its continuance; and the venerable Cyprian, by his constancy in death, bore sure testimony to the power of the faith, which he had adorned by a life of piety and wisdom. After this time the peace of the Church was almost undisturbed for nearly fifty years. The religion of Christ was rapidly extending over the most distant provinces of the Roman empire^c. It was preached, before the close of the century, in Persia, Armenia, and Scythia itself^d; the barbarous tribes of the north heard with joy the word of salvation; "in every nation, and village, and city, both the Greeks and barbarians, the doctrine of Christ was spread throughout the world^e;" and upon the ruins of paganism was fast rising, in majestic beauty, the edifice of the Catholic Church^f.

THE FOURTH CENTURY.

The tenth
persecution.

BEFORE Christianity was permanently embraced as the established religion of the State, it was destined to endure a persecution more violent in character and permanent in duration than any to which it had been before exposed. Diocletian, who had ascended the throne at the close of the last century, became its

^c Mosheim, Gen. Hist., c. iii.
^e Clemens Alexandrinus, Strom. vi.

^d Dionys. ap. Euseb. vii. 5.
^f Vide Lyall, Diss. i. cap. i.

bitter and uncompromising enemy. The influence of the Cæsar, Galerius, combined with that of the hea-^{FOURTH CENTURY.} then priesthood, and of the philosophic schools, was diligently employed in urging the emperor to the adoption of rigorous measures, which aimed at nothing less than the extermination of the Christians. Diocletian complied with their persevering demands, and published his first edict in the year 303. For nearly ten years from that time the Church was subjected to general and continuous assaults. All assemblies of Christians for religious worship were prohibited on pain of death; copies of the Scriptures were diligently sought for and destroyed; the sacred edifices confiscated, and the bishops everywhere exposed to suffering and torture^s. Nor was the severity of this persecution materially lessened, until that great event took place which marks the first great epoch in the history of the Church; when the agency which had hitherto been opposed to the propagation of the truth, was employed in its maintenance and support. This was the conversion of Constantine, in the year 312.

It is related by Eusebius^h, that Constantine, when marching towards Rome, to meet Maxentius in battle, beheld at mid-day in the air a luminous cross, on which were inscribed the words, "By this conquerⁱ;" and that on the following night he was commanded by divine authority to make a standard, emblazoned with the same holy sign; which, carried before his army, should lead them to victory and conquest in the name of Christ. The historian proceeds to inform us that Constantine obeyed the injunction, and ad-

^s Eusebius, Eccl. Hist., lib. viii.; Lactantius de Morte Persecut., cap. xiii.

^h Vit. Const., c. 28, sqq.

ⁱ Εἰς τὸν αἶνα.

FOURTH
CENTURY.

vanced with the uplifted banner against the forces of Maxentius, over whom he obtained a decisive victory. Persuaded by this event of the truth of Christianity, he readily embraced, and through the remainder of his life consistently maintained, its doctrines^k.

The miracu-
lous powers
of the early
Church.

If, as some historians have thought, it seemed good to the Divine Wisdom to impart the aid of miraculous signs for the confirmation of the faith, long subsequent to apostolic days, we cannot, as Fleury has well observed, imagine any period more favourable for their bestowal, than when kings and nations are to be gained to Christ. This remark is pious and strictly just; and it is manifest that miraculous powers were long claimed by the early Church. On the other hand, many wonders asserted to have been wrought rest on very insufficient evidence; and among these, perhaps, ought to be placed the vision of Constantine^l. In considering a question involved in so much obscurity as is that which regards the miraculous gifts of the early Church, it is most reasonable to consider, on the one hand, that they were almost exclusively confined to apostolic days; and, on the other hand, to allow that supernatural signs may have been occasionally granted after that period, for the vindication of the truth, and the comfort of God's faithful servants.

Edict of
Milan.

The first effort of Constantine after his conversion was to mitigate in some degree the intolerance of paganism. With the concurrence of Licinius, he drew up in the year 313, the edict of Milan; by which the churches forfeited in the time of Dio-

^k Fleury, lib. xi; Eusebius, Vit. Const.

^l Vide Waddington, Ch. Hist., cap. vi. p. 76.

cletian were restored to the Christians, and liberty was afforded to them in the celebration of the divine services^m. The death of Licinius, in the year 324, enabled him to take still more decisive measures. He now openly discouraged pagan festivals, although he considered it unjust, and perhaps unsafe, to forbid their observance. He took into his confidence the bishops of the Christian Church, bestowed large sums in the erection and endowment of the churches which were raised for the worship of the true God, and sought, by unremitting efforts to promote the faith, what he justly considered to be the truest welfare of his subjectsⁿ.

FOURTH
CENTURY.

Constantine
favours the
Christians.

The same period, however, which witnessed the outward consolidation and security of the Church, was destined to behold the prevalence of an internal division more hostile to her peace than even the subtle theories of the Gnostics, or the errors of the philosophic schools. In the year 319, Arius, a presbyter of Alexandria, openly asserted, in opposition to the bishop, Alexander, that "the Son was not of the same essence with the Father; that He had been created by the Father before all things; and was therefore not co-eternal with the Father, but rather inferior to Him both in power and in glory^o." Doctrines so new and dangerous aroused the alarm of the Eastern Church; the bishop summoned a council at Alexandria, and, with the concurrence of more than one hundred other bishops, declared Arius cut off from the communion of the faithful. But although

Rise of
Arianism.

Council of
Alexandria.

^m Vit. Const., lib. ii.; Gibbon, Decl. and Fall, vol. i. p. 456.

ⁿ Idem, lib. iv. c. 15.

^o Vide Dollinger, as quoted by Hook, Life of Arius, Eccl. Biog., vol. i. p. 261; and Mosheim, Gen. Hist., c. iv. p. 11. ch. 5.

FOURTH
CENTURY.Council of
Nice.Its de-
cisions.
The Nicene
Creed.

excommunicated, he was not silenced; his natural eloquence and engaging manner^p gained many followers, and the heresy spread fast throughout Asia, not only among the laity, but the clergy. Its progress became so rapid, that the orthodox bishops were compelled to invoke the assistance of the emperor. Constantine was for some time unwilling^q to adopt measures, which, as he thought, might not have the effect of restoring unity. At length he yielded to continued solicitations and summoned a general council at Nice in the year 325, to declare the doctrine of the Church. Upwards of three hundred bishops^r, many of whom bore the marks of persecution for the faith of Christ, assembled from all parts of the world, attended by great numbers of priests and deacons; all eager to maintain the truth which had been held from the beginning, that the Lord Jesus Christ was perfect God as well as perfect Man. Constantine presided over the council; and by his authority Arius was cited to appear before it, that he might explain and defend his opinions. The bishop of Alexandria was present, and brought with him one of his deacons, the celebrated Athanasius, who was afterwards to defend, during forty-six years of alternate dignity and persecution, the purity of the Catholic faith^s. By the almost unanimous decree of the council^t, the tenets of Arius were condemned as heretical; and a definition of the orthodox doctrine was drawn up in that Creed which the Church has ever since

^p Maimbourg, *Hist. Eccl.*, lib. i.; Epiphanius, *Hæres.* 69.^q Sozomen, lib. i. c. 15 and 16; Socrates, lib. i. c. 7.^r Socrates, lib. i. c. 8.^s Gibbon, *Hist. Decl. and Fall*, c. 21.^t Vide Bishop Kaye on the Council of Nicea.

received under the title of the Nicene^a. The assembled fathers, before they returned to their respective dioceses, determined the question as to the celebration of Easter, which had so long agitated the Church, and drew up many valuable canons for the regulation of ecclesiastical discipline^x.

FOURTH
CENTURY.

Its regu-
lation of
discipline.

Constantine, in establishing Christianity as the national religion, was careful neither to claim nor to assume any of those powers which had always been possessed by the Church. The jurisdiction of the State was scrupulously confined to the decision of civil and political questions, the arrangement of ecclesiastical boundaries, and of outward discipline^y. The appointment of bishops, the convocation of provincial synods, the settlement of controversies in matters of faith, the forms of worship, and the power of spiritual censure, were neither claimed by the emperor, nor conceded by the Church^z. And while these privileges were preserved inviolate, the inclination or policy of Constantine bestowed others hardly less valuable. The whole body of the clergy enjoyed immunity from all civil offices^a; to the bishops was committed the exclusive power of jurisdiction in spiritual cases; and their decision in civil questions referred to them, was declared to be valid by the authority of the magistrate^b. From the earliest ages of Christianity, we find that cases in dispute were so referred to the arbitration of the bishop; but its acceptance, before the time of Constantine, had depended on the mutual

Nature of
the connec-
tion be-
tween the
Church and
the State.

Retention
of former
power.

And acqui-
sition of new
privileges.

^a The latter part, from the words "The Holy Ghost" was added at the Council of Constantinople, A.D. 381.

^z Semler, cent. iv. c. 3. de Conciliis.

^y Vide Waddington, cap. vi.

^a Idem, ad ann. 319, sect. 30.

^z Vide Baronius, ad ann. 329.

^b Sozomen, lib. l. c. 8, 9; Fleury, Hist. Eccl., lib. x. sect. 27.

**FOURTH
CENTURY.****Policy of
Constantine.**

consent of the disputants, and was not confirmed by any legal authority.

Motives of interest, doubtless, combined with those of inclination in influencing the policy of the emperor. Paganism was tottering to its fall; Christianity, on the other hand, appeared to emerge from the flames of persecution more vigorous and powerful than before. Neither the malice of Judaism, nor the assaults of philosophy, nor the sword of Diocletian, had availed to stem the progress of eternal truth. Long before the Christian faith was embraced by the State, the most eminent of its apologists had boasted that it filled the cities, the palaces, and the senate, and that the heathen retained only the deserted temples^c. It will not therefore surprise us that Constantine, in seeking the alliance of the Church, might have been actuated by mingled feelings of policy and conviction. The perversity of scepticism has, indeed, denied^d the latter, and imputed his conversion to the motives of interested hypocrisy. There is no historical proof of this calumny; but, were it true, it would tend to shew the vast influence of Christianity, when it became the policy of an emperor to embrace and vindicate its doctrines. And this, as an historian^e has well observed, is a fact of much greater importance than the motives or sincerity of any individual.

**Progress of
Arianism.**

Arius continued to promulgate his heretical doctrines in open defiance of the Nicene decisions: they were not without support in the palace of Constantine; and the imperial decrees issued towards the end of his reign were favourable to the Arian interests.

^c Tertullian, *Apol.* c. 37.

^d Gibbon, c. 20.

^e Waddington, c. vi. p. 79.

The heresiarch himself, who, after the council of Nice, had been banished, was now recalled^f, together with his disciple, Eusebius, bishop of Nicomedia^g; and the emperor commanded the venerable Alexander, bishop of Constantinople, to restore him to the unity of the Church. The prelate refused compliance, and declared, in temperate but firm language, that his duty would not permit him to hold communion with Arius. Preparations were made by the court to enforce obedience; but the sudden death of the heresiarch relieved the orthodox Christians from the fear of humiliation and disgrace^h.

FOURTH
CENTURY.

Death of
Arius.

We have seen that Athanasius, while a deacon, and only twenty-nine years of age, had accompanied his bishop to the council of Nice: and there he first manifested those great powers of mind, and that zeal in maintaining the truth, which rendered him the most distinguished among the fathers of the Church. Four months after the dissolution of the council, Alexander died, commending the Church at Alexandria to the vigilance of Athanasius. The bishops of the province assembled to elect a successor; and their choice of the youthful deacon was confirmed by the acclamations of rejoicing multitudes. The dignity to which he was thus raised, in opposition to his own wishes, was attended by difficulties and responsibilities of no ordinary character. Helena, the mother of Constantine, was now dead; and her influence, which had been employed in the maintenance of the orthodox faith, could no longer direct the councils of the em-

Becomes
bishop of
Alexandria.

^f For the date, vid. Mosheim, cent. iv. p. ii. c. v.; Tillemont.

^g Tillemont, art. vi.

^h Maimbourg, Hist. Arian.; Hook's Life of Arius, vol. i. p. 270.

FOURTH
CENTURY.Opposition
of the
Arians.Council of
Tyre.Council of
Antioch.

peror, who, through the influence of his sister Constantia, was induced to adopt those measures in favour of Arianism which we have before enumerated. To all such concessions, Athanasius opposed himself with firm and uncompromising fidelity; and the Arian party, now possessed of great power both in the Church and State, resolved to leave no means untried of silencing so able and vigorous an opponent. Their bishops assembled at Tyre, A. D. 335; unfounded and iniquitous accusations were there brought against Athanasius; and a decree of the sectarian council pronounced against him the sentence of deposition and exile. The emperor confirmed the decision of the synod, and Athanasius was compelled to retire to Treves, where he was welcomed by the younger Constantine. He remained in France until after the death of the emperor, and was then recalled to Alexandria by Constantius, who had succeeded his father in the government of the East. Constantius was, however, himself strongly inclined to favour the Arians, and it is probable that policy, rather than inclination, dictated to him the restoration of the intrepid bishop. Athanasius was not long permitted to remain in peace. One hundred Arian bishops met at Antioch, and drew up a creed, which, while it nearly resembled those of the Church, contained expressions very ambiguous, and capable of heretical interpretation¹. To this they required his assent; and when he indignantly refused, so strong a persecution was raised at Alexandria, as to again necessitate his retirement from the city. He fled to Rome;

¹ They omitted the word "consubstantial," inserted at the Council of Nice. Vide Le Clerc, apud Jortin, E. H. b. iii.; Tillemont, Sur Les Ariens, art. xxxii.

and the unanimous consent of the Western Church assembled a council at Sardica, A. D. 347, to vindicate the integrity of the faith, and reverse the decrees of the Tyrian and Antiochene synods. When the decisions of this council in favour of Athanasius were known, Constans, emperor of the West, threatened that, if need were, he would restore him to his episcopal throne by force of arms. Constantius unwillingly consented to his recall. "The entrance of the archbishop into his capital was a triumphal procession: absence and persecution had endeared him to the Alexandrians: his authority, which he exercised with rigour, was more firmly established, and his fame was diffused from Ethiopia to Britain, over the whole extent of the Christian world^k."

FOURTH
CENTURY.

Council of
Sardica.

Recall of
Athanasius.

Persecution once more raged: Arianism was again triumphant; and the venerable soldier of Christ was a third time driven from the city. To ensure his condemnation, a council was held at Milan, in which the voice of an infallible pope was raised to sanction the Arian heresy^l. A storm of persecution burst upon the Christians of Alexandria. The Church in which Athanasius was officiating was attacked by night: a cloud of arrows was discharged among the worshippers; and soldiers with drawn swords surrounded the sacred edifice, in order to prevent the escape of the bishop. He long sat in the church, resisting the importunity of his clergy to leave the scene of danger; but at last complied: the darkness and tumult favoured his deliverance: from that mo-

Council of
Milan.

^k Gibbon, *Decline and Fall of Rom. Emp.*, vol. i. p. 485; Socrates, lib. ii. c. 18; Theodoret, lib. xi. c. 11, 12.

^l Dupin, vol. i. p. 190. Vide Gibbon's account of the council, vol. i. p. 487, sq.

FOURTH
CENTURY.

ment he disappeared from the eyes of his enemies, and remained above six years concealed in impenetrable obscurity.

Influence of
Athanasius.

Never, however, had his influence been greater, than when, persecuted and a fugitive, he sought refuge in the deserts of the Thebaid^m. From its distant and solitary recesses, he issued letters of consolation to his flock; and, as these were diligently circulated, the pen of the exiled bishop became more powerful than the sword of Constantius. The emperor died in 361; and his successor, Julian, a pagan, and therefore wholly uninterested in the Christian controversies, recalled from exile all those bishops who had been banished for their adherence to Catholic truth. Athanasius was once more restored to his episcopal throne, and, by his moderation and charity in that elevated station, extorted from the heathen themselves that tribute of respect which had been denied to his zeal for the purity of the Churchⁿ. But Julian, who despised the Christians, honoured Athanasius with his

Persecution
of Julian.

sincere and peculiar hatred. Upon his opposition to the re-introduction of pagan rites in Alexandria, the emperor commanded him to be put to death; and the venerable patriarch was again compelled to retire to the solitudes of the desert. Nor was he allowed to return during the lifetime of Julian; but upon the death of that worthless monarch in 363, he again took possession of the see, which, except for a short interval, he held in peace during the remainder of his life. Full of honours as of years, revered by the

^m Rufinus, lib. i. c. 16; Greg. Naz., tom. i. orat. xxi. p. 384, 385. Vide Villemain's "Tableau de l'éloquence Chrétienne au Quatrième Siècle" Ed. Paris, 1854.

ⁿ Gregory Nazianzen, Eulog.

Church, whose faith and purity he had ever steadfastly defended with all the powers of a great and vigorous mind, Athanasius died in the year 370°.

FOURTH
CENTURY.

Death of
Athanasius.

The decline of Arianism was precipitated by internal divisions, and by the want of that temporal support afforded to it by Constantius and Valens. It was probably much depressed at the accession of Theodosius the Great, in the year 380; and the example and influence of that emperor, diligently employed in the maintenance of the Nicene doctrines, were wanting^p to a cause which seemed to possess few elements of stability, and little internal concord. From that time Arianism withered rapidly and irrevocably throughout the provinces of the East^q. The heresy of Macedonius, denying the divinity of the Holy Ghost, had lately attained considerable prevalence; and Theodosius, with the double object of confirming the decrees of the Council of Nice, and condemning the new errors, assembled at Constantinople in the year 381, that council which stands in the history of the Church as the Second General or Œcumenical Synod. This assembly, while it vindicated, in opposition to the Arian sophistry, that part of the Nicene Creed drawn up by the first council, appended to it the doctrine of the Church on the divinity of the Holy Ghost, and condemned as heretical the assertions of Macedonius.

Decline of
Arianism.

Council of
Constanti-
nople
against
Mace-
donius.

Among the most important changes either introduced or first attaining prominence during this century, may be placed the change in the titles

Internal
discipline
of the
Church.

° For a fuller account of the Life of Athanasius, vide Dupin, Eusebius, Tillemont, Cave's Lives, and Hook's Biograph., vol. i. p. 330; but more especially Gibbon, vol. i. p. 481.

^p Maimbourg, Hist. Arian., bk. vi. ^q Waddington, Ch. Hist., p. 99.

FOURTH
CENTURY.

of the hierarchy, on the temporal establishment of the Church by Constantine, and the development, or rather increase, of monasticism.

Gradations
of the
hierarchy.

The former was in great degree attributable to the wish of Constantine, that the administrations of civil and ecclesiastical government should be as nearly allied and associated with each other as the constitution of either would permit*. As four præfects were possessed of superior authority in the regulation of state affairs, it was judged advisable that the same number of prelates should assume, together with the title of patriarchs, the highest rank among the bishops of the Church. Those of Rome, Alexandria, Antioch, and Constantinople obtained, from this circumstance, a pre-eminent authority and influence. Under these ranked the exarchs, metropolitans, and archbishops, whose varied jurisdictions were confined to provinces*. The bishops occupied the lowest rank. Of these, a thousand presided over the Eastern, and eight hundred over the Western, Church.

Monas-
ticism.

Want of space prohibits us from recording, with that fulness which the importance of the subject justly deserves, the rise, and progress, and influence of monasticism. Some have, on insufficient evidence, asserted it to be coeval with Christianity itself; it is, however, indisputable that it prevailed at a very early period. The earliest hermits appear to have been those who fled, during the persecutions of the first three centuries, from the cities and inhabited country to the remote and austere security afforded by the deserts of Egypt and Asia Minor. But that seclusion

* Vide Euseb. Eccl. Hist., and Gibbon, in loc.

* Mosheim, in loc.

and asceticism which was originally owing to necessity, did not cease with the necessity itself. In this century, Anthony gathered together the hermits into societies; and under the name of Cœnobites, they occupied the monasteries erected for their use in the Egyptian solitudes^t. Their time was occupied in the alternate practices of labour and devotion^u; nor were the original monastic institutions liable to those imputations of sloth and corruption, which were justly urged against them in later ages of the Church. On the contrary, it is a remarkable fact, that all the early fathers write in commendation of their discipline. "One might see in them," says Athanasius, "a peculiar country of piety and righteousness; so that a stranger, beholding the monasteries and their order, would be led to exclaim, 'How beauteous are thy homes, O Jacob, and thy tabernacles, O Israel: as shady groves, as a garden on a river, as tents which the Lord hath pitched, and as cedars by the waters'."^v

FOURTH
CENTURY.

Its pro-
gress in
the East.

We shall at a later period review the character and influence of the system; but for the present it is necessary that we confine ourselves to the history of its progress in the Church.

Athanasius himself is generally believed to have introduced monasticism into the West, during his residence at Rome in the year 341. The work thus begun received powerful support in Italy from the celebrated Ambrose, bishop of Milan, and in France, from St. Martin of Tours; and as the dispositions and opinions of the age alike favoured its growth, the chants of monastic devotion soon resounded in the

And West.

^t Bingham, *Christ. Antiq.*, lib. viii.
^u Collationes Cassiani, lib. xxiv. ^v Athanas., *Ep.* 44.

FOURTH
CENTURY.The Rule of
St. Basil.

most remote districts of the West*. It was however destitute of that unity in design and government, without which no institution can permanently flourish, until Basil, archbishop of Cæsarea, about the year 360, instituted the Rule which for two centuries gave consistency and stability to the monastic system throughout universal Christendom, and bound together, by the obligation of a common vow, the different forms of the religious societies. The same profession was now held from the plains of Syria to France and Ireland; the same bond of union was universally recognised by the monks; and any deviations from the Rule of St. Basil were both infrequent and inconsiderable. But as the system was one which in its own nature involved frequent decay, and consequent necessity of reproduction, it will hereafter be our office to record the successive attempts made by the piety of a later age to revive monastic purity and zeal.

The fathers
of the
fourth
century.

The most eminent among the Christian fathers of the fourth century were Gregory of Nazianzen, and Gregory of Nyssa, Cyril, Hilary of Poitiers, and Ambrose, bishop of Milan†. Their names and writings are generally associated with the confutation of those heresies which still harassed the Church. Gregory of Nazianzen long presided over the see of Constantinople, and opposed with vigour and success the Apollinarian errors. Gregory of Nyssa was brother of St. Basil, and the author of several valuable commentaries on the Scriptures. Cyril was bishop of Jerusalem. Hilary was distinguished for his zeal in maintaining the purity of the faith in the Church of

* Augustin. de Moribus Eccl., c. 33; Jerome, Ep. 35. ad Heliod.

† For a fuller account of these fathers, vide Cave's Lives, vols. ii. and iii. and Hook's Biographies.

France. Ambrose was called to the bishopric of Milan by the unanimous wish of the clergy and people, A. D. 374². In that city the Arians had gained much influence, as the Empress Justina, who resided there, was devotedly attached to the heretical doctrines. Hence arose many violent disputes; amid which Ambrose displayed courage and ability in maintaining the privileges of the Milanese Church. The Emperor Theodosius the Great was subjected by the bishop to penance, for some cruelties which he had inflicted upon the inhabitants of Thessalonica^a. We may learn from the writings of Ambrose that great increase in spiritual power which took place during this century; and it is clear that we may trace in the claims which he at times advances, somewhat of that assumption upon which the system of the Roman Church was subsequently based. Nevertheless it may be well, before we join in the unqualified condemnation with which some historians have regarded the increasing power of the Christian priesthood, to consider whether it was not both useful and necessary during that age. Nothing can indeed justify its unscriptural pretensions in later times. But when the tumult and anarchy which universally prevailed in the empire is taken into account, we shall on many grounds feel thankful that some power existed, which might alleviate misery, and repress the cruelties of the civil jurisdiction. It was well that, in an age of barbarism and warfare, the spiritual influence of the Church should be employed in the maintenance of peace, and in the advocacy of the oppressed.

FOURTH
CENTURY.

Ambrose
and the
Arians.

Penance of
Theodosius.

Principles
of spiritual
authority.

^a Vide Dupin, *Nouv. Bibl.*, Vie St. Ambrose; and Fleury, liv. 17. sect. 21.

^a Fleury, liv. 19. sect. 21.

FOURTH
CENTURY.

The writings of the fathers.

Character of tradition.

It may here be not uninstrusive to enquire the degree of respect due to the writings of the early fathers. We have already observed that we must receive them on the ordinary rules of historical testimony, if we would become acquainted either with the belief or discipline of the primitive Church^b. They are, however, more especially valuable as acquainting us with the unanimous consent of the Christian world on the great doctrines of the faith. Thus, although it has been objected, and may willingly be granted, that on immaterial and speculative points they contain many errors and contradictions, there is no such discrepance in any important respect; on the contrary, their definitions of Catholic truth are distinguished by a concord alike remarkable and satisfactory. It may be safely asserted that upon no point does more general ignorance prevail, than upon that of tradition. "Among unread or half-read persons of our somewhat confident age," says the learned Faber, "it is a not uncommon saying that they disregard the early fathers, and that they will abide by nothing save the decision of Scripture alone. . . . By such a plan, while they call upon us to despise the sentiments of Christian antiquity, as far as we can learn them upon historical testimony, they expect us to receive without hesitation, and as undoubted verities, their own mere upstart speculations upon the sense of God's holy Word; that is to say, the evidence of the early fathers, and the hermeneutic decisions of the primitive Church, we may laudably and profitably contemn; but *themselves* we must receive (for they themselves are content to receive themselves) as well-

^b c. l. p. 5.

nigh certain and infallible expositors of Scripture^c." This delusion has so widely prevailed, that it is difficult to say whether most evil has arisen from the perversity of those who wholly reject tradition, or from the superstition of the Romish Church, which places it on a level with the holy Scriptures^d. Between these two opposite errors, an impartial historian will receive the writings of the early fathers as most valuable witnesses of that rule of faith which was held in the purest ages of Christianity; and regard their universal agreement in all its material points as a certain proof that the "faith once delivered to the saints" was preserved unadulterate to later ages^e.

We must not conclude this chapter without recording a very remarkable attempt to subvert the evidences of Christianity made by the Emperor Julian in the year 363. He was, as has been observed, a pagan, and was distinguished by his earnest adherence to the decaying superstitions, and his endeavours to overthrow the Church. With this object, he sought to render the absurdities of paganism less conspicuous, by throwing over them a veil of allegory, and at the same time to incorporate with its system regulations borrowed from the Christian discipline. At first he hoped by this means to infuse energy and vitality into declining paganism; but the futility of all such expectations soon became apparent, and Julian then directed his attention to the professed overthrow of Christianity.

Attempt of
Julian to
rebuild the
temple.

Of all the prophecies by which the faith was sup-

^c Faber on Primitive Election, c. xii. p. 191.

^d "Pari pietatis affectu ac reverentia." Concil. Trident., sess. iv. p. 7, 8.

^e Vide Hook's Dict., p. 558.

FOURTH
CENTURY.

ported, none was more remarkable, or had obtained greater prevalence, than that which related to the destruction of the temple at Jerusalem. It is needless to say how signally it had been fulfilled, in the entire overthrow of the city, and the consequent dispersion of its inhabitants. For nearly three hundred years the argument derivable from this fact had been possessed of irresistible force: Julian saw this; and with the object of invalidating the prophecies, he undertook to rebuild the temple. "He doubtless perceived, that if he could remove this ground of faith, many would be persuaded that the ancient books of the Christians had no better title to divine inspiration than the Homeric rhapsodies or the Orphic hymns^f;" and the work commenced, amid the anxious anticipations both of its advocates and its opponents.

The facts which follow rest upon the combined testimony of four contemporary writers^g, and their truth is established by the confession of pagan historians, whose partialities were not likely to be enlisted in favour of Christianity. Scarcely was the restoration of the temple commenced, under the superintendence of Alypius, a friend of the emperor, when a violent earthquake and tempest arrested its progress; strange and unwonted appearances were visible in the heavens; fire, ascending from the bowels of the earth, dispersed the workmen and destroyed the materials; and repeated attempts to resume the work were attended by repeated failures; so that Julian was reluctantly compelled to order its

^f Waddington, *Hist. of Ch.*, chap. viii. p. 110.

^g Ammianus Marcellinus, lib. xxiii. c. 1; Ambrose, *Ep.* xi. t. 2; Chrysostom *adv. Jud.*; Gregory Nazianzen, *Orat.* iv. *adv. Julian.*

discontinuance. The operations thus interrupted were never again renewed; and the only effect of this attempt to subvert the truth was the confirmation of its already infallible evidences.

FOURTH
CENTURY.

Shortly after this event the persecutions of the Church were terminated by the death of Julian; the attacks of paganism decreased in frequency and effect; and the only considerable peril which threatened her repose consisted in internal heresies and divisions. These, however, encountered at all times such vigorous opposition, that the purity of the faith was never generally corrupted. And it is a just observation of Bishop Bull, that on this account the primitive Catholic Church should be taken as the standard by which to judge the orthodoxy of all succeeding Churches^h.

Purity of
doctrine in
the ante-
Nicene
Church.

THE FIFTH CENTURY.

At the beginning of this century, Nestorius, bishop of Constantinople, originated a very peculiar heresy, which gave rise to many dissensions, and harassed the Church for several years. He asserted that in Christ there were not only two natures, but two persons,—that the union between his divinity and humanity was one of will and affection only, not of nature or of person,—and that therefore Christ was

The Nes-
torian
heresy.

^h Bishop Bull's Works, vol. ii. p. 238.

FIFTH
CENTURY.

Third
general
council.

to be carefully distinguished from God, who dwelt in Him as in a temple¹; further than this, that the Virgin Mary was to be called "Mother of Christ," or even "Mother of Man," but that she could not properly be called "Mother of God^k." The difference between the doctrine of the Church and the definitions of Nestorius was, by many considered slight and unimportant. The peace of the Christian world had, however, been so often disturbed by divisions, which first arose from only trivial causes, that it was thought advisable to obtain an authoritative condemnation of the new errors. The third general council assembled at Ephesus in the year 431, under the presidency of the younger Theodosius. Guided by the influence of Cyril, it proceeded to anathematize the Nestorian heresy with a zeal which, however sincere it may have been, was hardly "according to knowledge." The patriarch of Alexandria refused to postpone the decision of the council until the arrival of the bishop of Antioch and some other prelates, whose assent was requisite to invest it with full validity. To this act of injustice we may doubtless ascribe the fact, that the opinions so condemned rather progressed than receded during the following century, and took deep root in almost every country of the East^l.

It is worthy of observation, that one extreme of religious error almost invariably gives rise to another; and thus it was in the case of Nestorius. Eutyches, the abbot of a convent at Constantinople, eagerly desirous of avoiding the heresy of the patriarch, fell

¹ Vide Fleury, liv. xxv. sect. 2; Hook, Ch. Dict., p. 408.

^k Χριστότοκος, Ἀνθρωπότοκος, ἀλλ' οὐ Θεότοκος. Anastasius.

^l Mosheim, Cent. vii. p. 2. ch. v.

into another yet more subtle and dangerous. He openly asserted that there was in Christ but one nature, "that of the incarnate Word." A council was a second time assembled at Ephesus, which, from its irregular and tumultuous proceedings, has in later times gained the title of the "Council of Robbers^m." FIFTH CENTURY.
Council of Robbers,
A.D. 449. Its decision, given in favour of Eutyches, was received by the Church with the deepest disapprobation; and at the request of Leo, bishop of Rome, the Emperor Marcion summoned a general council, which Fourth general council. met at Chalcedon in the year 451, to determine the doctrine in dispute. It shortly published a definition of faith, in which the creeds of the three preceding councils of Nice, Constantinople, and Ephesus, were confirmed, and the orthodox doctrine of the divine and human natures in Christ was clearly defined. The decisions of these four general councils on the great truths of redemption, have always been received and approved by the universal Church, as being in perfect agreement with the primitive and apostolic faith.

After condemning the opinions of Eutyches, the council proceeded to enact many useful canons for the regulation of the monastic order. These appear to have been rendered necessary by the confusions which had arisen in many places, where the monks claimed exemption from the jurisdiction of the bishops. It was now decided that they should invariably be subject to episcopal rule, and that the advances which they had recently made in ecclesiastical pretensions should be repressed. One of the canons of this council defined the jurisdictions of the bishop of Proceedings of the council.

^m Σύνοδος ληστρική, — Conventus Latronum.

**FIFTH
CENTURY.**

Rome and the patriarch of Constantinople as equal in power and privileges. At the same time the former prelate was allowed precedence in rank, because Rome had formerly been the imperial city^a.

The Pelagian
heresy.

In the year 412, Pelagius, a British monk, promulgated the following doctrines. He taught that the sin of Adam was in its consequences confined to our first parents; that men are not born in a state of sin, and that they are therefore enabled by their own natural powers to work out their salvation. The confutation of these errors is so intimately connected with the life of St. Augustine, that we must make a short digression, in order to record the previous history of that eminent father.

Augustine.

Born at Thagaste, a small town of Numidia, in the year 354, he received his earliest instructions from his mother, Monica, who appears to have been a Christian of deep and earnest piety. But when about twenty years of age, he fell into the Manichæan heresy. This was undoubtedly the most absurd and irrational form of error at any time assumed, among the various deviations from the truth which harassed and divided Christianity. It was founded upon an attempt to combine the doctrines of the Church with the paganism of the East; and the result, abounding in ridiculous theories^o, was fully worthy of the design. Augustine, however, appears to have remained a Manichee for upwards of nine years. It was not until the year 386, that the discourses of Ambrose, at Milan, awoke him to a sense of his errors, and led him to seek admission into the

The Manichæan
heresy.

Conversion
of Augus-
tine.

^a Fleury, liv. xxviii. sect. 30; Baron., ann. 451. sect. 148.

^o Vide Guiseler on Manichæism.

Christian Church. Three years after he had received baptism, he became a presbyter under Valerius, bishop of Hippo, a small town near Carthage, in Africa; and in 395 succeeded him in the episcopate. His earnest endeavours were now directed to the promotion of unity, and the reconciliation of the Donatists^p to the Church. By his influence the Agapæ, or feasts of charity, which, as we have already observed, were instituted in apostolic days, but had since become perverted and degenerate in character, fell into disuse^q. He next attacked the Pelagian errors, and obtained their condemnation by councils of African bishops assembled at Carthage and Milevum. Zosimus, bishop of Rome, and John, patriarch of Jerusalem, were shortly afterwards gained over by Celestius to the cause of the heretics, and refused their assent to the decrees of the African prelates. Augustine was however undaunted by their opposition; in 418, another council of more than two hundred bishops met at Carthage, and ratified the condemnation of Pelagius. Zosimus himself subsequently acknowledged his error, and united with Augustine in opposing and discouraging the tenets to which he had before expressed his adherence. Pelagianism appears shortly after this event to have much declined. It had, indeed, at no time formed a distinct sect. Its doctrines were asserted by a few learned men, and were unknown to the people at large. They have, however, been held by some, under different modifications, in every succeeding age.

FIFTH
CENTURY.The Dona-
tists.Abolition of
Agapæ.
Pelagian-
ism.Decline of
Pelagian-
ism.

In the year 410, Rome was sacked by Alaric, king

^p Donatus was a presbyter of Carthage, who had formed a schism in the Church, on a question of discipline. Vide Fleury, liv. x. sect. 11.

^q Fleury, liv. xx. sect. 11.

FIFTH
CENTURY.Fall of the
Roman
empire.Troubles of
Africa.Death of
Augustine.St. John
Chrysos-
tom.

of the Goths. That mighty empire which had been for centuries almost co-extensive with the known world, was fast approaching its dissolution. The civil tumults and barbarian invasions, which then desolated every land, were felt even on the sterile shores of Africa. The Vandals, under Genseric, crossed over from Spain, and laid waste its northern provinces. Hippo itself was besieged; and, amid the tumult of surrounding warfare, its great bishop was parted from his flock. Shortly before his last illness, he had composed the greatest and most celebrated of his works, "The City of God," to confirm the troubled faith of Christians, and shew the falsity of heathenism. His earnest desires that he might not survive the destruction of his episcopal seat, and the ruin of his country, were granted; for he died in the third month of the siege, August 13, 430. Shortly afterwards Hippo was taken and destroyed, and the once flourishing Churches of Africa are now numbered with the past; but the eloquence and piety of Augustine have survived, and his writings are become the treasured inheritance of the universal Church.

John Chrysostom, surnamed, from his eloquence, the "Golden-mouthed," was born at Antioch, A.D. 347, and in 397 was raised to the dignity of bishop of Constantinople. He was distinguished by the fervour and splendid oratory of his discourses, and the zeal with which he denounced the immoralities of the imperial court*. His endeavours to repress the scandals imputed to some of the bishops, and more especially the monastic institutions, roused against

* Fleury, liv. xxiv. ch. 38, 39.

* Gibbon, Decl. and Fall, ch. xxxii.

him the indignation of the episcopal order. Their influence was combined with that of the court, which feared the censure and hated the virtues of Chrysostom, to obtain his condemnation and banishment. These endeavours were successful; and amid the tumults of an angry populace, enraged at the condemnation of their bishop, he was driven forth to exile at Cucusus, a town situated amid the cold and barren ridges of Mount Taurus. In this solitude he spent the latter years of his life, still distinguished for that firmness of mind and majestic eloquence which had formerly rendered him illustrious^t. He died in the year 407.

A Latin translation of the Old Testament, valuable alike for learning and accuracy, was made about the beginning of this century, by the celebrated Jerome. ^{Jerome.} The character of that father, distinguished as it is by extreme superstition and immoderate violence, presents few points deserving the commendation of an historian. Nevertheless his labours in this translation of the Scriptures were most serviceable to the Church; and it cannot be doubted that he possessed much application and extensive learning^u.

It is to that period, the history of which is now recorded, that we trace with certainty and distinctness the rise of many superstitions, and manifest deviations from purity of faith and practice. The ^{Corrup-} brightest ages of the Church were past. Upon the ^{tions.} foundation of apostolic doctrine and holy discipline was soon to be laid that superstructure of human

^t Hook's Life of Chrysostom, vol. iv. p. 72; Dupin, Nouv. Biblioth., Art. St. Jean Chrys.

^u Dupin, Vie S. Jerome; Lardner; Tillemont.

**FIFTH
CENTURY.**

Celibacy.

**Worship of
images and
relics.**

Purgatory.

inventions which distinguishes the system of the Romish communion. The celibacy of the clergy, although not in any degree enforced, was now regarded as a state of superior sanctity, and encouraged by episcopal and popular advocacy². Siricius, bishop of Rome in the year 385, issued many letters exhorting to a single life; and we find that by the end of the following century the clergy of that city had very generally adopted the rule of celibacy. A much more dangerous innovation took place in the increase of honour and reverence now paid to martyrs, the use of relics, and the invocation of saints. These practices may be traced to two sources:—1. The first Christians naturally regarded with veneration and respect the tombs and remains of those martyrs who had shed their blood in defence of the faith; and this feeling gradually degenerated into superstition, until at last the very bones of the saints were invested with a miraculous sanctity, and they were exalted to the office of intercessors in the courts of heaven. 2. To this it may be added, that the corruptions of paganism had to some degree influenced the popular practice, and tended to increase the prevailing credulity³. The honour once paid to the images of the gods was transferred to those of Christian saints; and, not unfrequently, the fables of heathen mythology were strangely combined with miraculous legends and astonishing prodigies, ascribed to the departed servants of God. To the same source we may ascribe the rise of the doctrine of purgatory. The pagan notion concerning the purification of souls de-

² Socrates, lib. i. c. 11; Dupin, Vie de Sirice.

³ Jortin, Eccl. Hist., vol. iv. p. 78, 220.

parted, by means of a penal fire, was, with some modifications, proposed for the reception of Christians. A belief had early existed in the Church, that there were after death various degrees of glory reserved for the faithful, and that the prayers of those remaining on earth availed to procure for the departed a higher measure of rest and felicity. And thus at the administration of the Eucharist it was customary to commemorate these, and to pray that, by virtue of the sacrifice of Christ, of which the sacrament was a memorial, they might be raised to the perfect enjoyment of the heavenly kingdom. But it was now openly asserted that the expiation of venial offences was to be effected by the endurance of suffering in an intermediate state; and the tenet of prayers for the dead was gradually superseded by that of purgatory, and its host of collateral superstitions.

Leo the Great, who became bishop of Rome in the year 440, was the most vigorous and able prelate that had hitherto ascended the chair of St. Peter. The times were gloomy and portentous, both in things spiritual and temporal. The empire was fast crumbling to decay, and its fruitful provinces were overrun by barbarian hordes. Twice was Leo himself obliged to join in those mournful processions which issued from the gates of Rome to implore the clemency of the rapacious victor; and twice did the venerable aspect of the aged bishop disarm the enmity of Attila and Genseric*. Nor were the affairs of the Church less troubled. The advance of superstition

Leo the
Great.

* Vide Hook's Life of Leo.

**FIFTH
CENTURY.****Power of
the Roman
see.****Increased
by Leo.****Auricular
confession.**

was slow, but general; and although unsanctioned by any direct precepts, the veneration of saints and relics, that fruitful source of corruption, was already tacitly assumed as a part of the ecclesiastical system. The authority of the see of Rome still remained undefined, but the controversies and miseries of the Church were not unfavourable to its progress. The power of its bishop had lately been much increased by the absence of the emperors from Italy. The barbarians themselves were not indisposed to reverence that spiritual influence which centred in the former metropolis of the world^a. Leo saw this, and proceeded to avail himself of such propitious circumstances, in asserting and consolidating the pretensions of his bishopric. Hilary of Arles resisted with firmness an infringement of Leo upon the rights of the Gallican Church; the council of Chalcedon refused to acknowledge any primacy in the Roman see, and would consent only to allow Leo that precedency which was due to the political importance of his episcopal city^b. If, however, Leo did not generally succeed in his wish for aggrandisement, it is clear that the authority of the see was much increased by his influence. The tendency of the age was favourable to the centralization of spiritual power, and the corner-stone of the papal edifice was already laid.

It had been customary in the primitive Church that notorious offenders should confess their sins publicly, and before the assembled congregation. This wholesome discipline was strongly discouraged by Leo, who advised the substitution of a secret confession to the

^a Vide Fleury, H. E., c. 17. ^b Concil. Chalced. xxix. Vide Fleury, Hv. xxviii. sect. 30; Baron., ann. 451. sect. 148.

priest alone. He died in the year 461. His writings, which are numerous, are distinguished by great ability, and are justly considered as some of the most valuable monuments of antiquity^c. FIFTH CENTURY.

Christianity continued to advance during the whole of this century; but its greatest conquests were gained in the kingdoms of the West. Those barbarous tribes which invaded and overthrew the Roman empire, embraced the religion of the conquered. The labours of Ulphilas^d had been crowned by the conversion of the Goths; and the Vandals, Suevi, and Burgundians, as they took possession of the empire, laid aside, together with their primæval barbarism, the pagan legends of their ancestors^e. Thus, amid the downfall of kingdoms and the perplexities of nations, the Church alone seemed to increase in power and stability. Progress of Christianity.

THE SIXTH CENTURY.

WE have already observed that Christianity had been established in England during the lifetime of the apostles. Tertullian speaks of it as a country inaccessible to the Romans, and yet subjugated beneath the yoke of Christ^f. In common with all other branches of the Church, that of Britain was called to

^c Dupin, t. iii. p. 2.
^e Mosheim, cent. V.

^d Fleury; Tillemont, Sur les Ariens, art. 132.
^f Tertullian, c. Judæos, c. vii.

SIXTH
CENTURY.

endure many persecutions, until Constantine embraced and defended the faith. That emperor was the son of Helena, a British lady; and from this circumstance he seems to have honoured the British bishops with his peculiar regard, as they were regularly summoned to all councils held for the regulation of faith and practice. They were present at the Council of Arles, in France, A.D. 314^g, at the General Council of Nice, A.D. 325, at Sardica, A.D. 347, and at Ariminum, A.D. 360. The invasion of the Anglo-Saxons, however, in 452, laid waste the Church; and the last British bishops were compelled to retire before the pagans, and withdraw their flocks to the fastnesses of the Welch mountains^h.

Mission of
Augustine.

More than a century elapsed before the light of Christianity again shone upon Britain. But towards the close of this century, circumstances occurred very favourable to its re-introduction. Ethelbert, king of Kent, had married Bertha, daughter of the king of Paris, a Christian; and Gregory the Great, then bishop of Rome, determined to second the influence of the queen in the conversion of her husband and his subjects. With this motive he sent over forty Benedictine monks, in the year 596, at the head of whom was Augustine, or Austin, a prior of the Gregorian monastery at Rome. Ethelbert received them with kindness, and heard with attention their explanation of Christian truthⁱ. The queen gave up for their use the little church of St. Martin's, at Canterbury, where they might proclaim to the heathen the tidings of

^g Concil. Arelat., Labbe, i. p. 1430; Abp. Usher, Brit. Eccl. Antiq., p. 73; Stillingfleet, Orig. Brit., p. 78, ed. 1837.

^h Vide Churton's Early English Church, c. 1.

ⁱ Bede, ii. 1.

grace and salvation. The king himself became a convert shortly afterwards, and his example was followed by great numbers of his subjects. In 597, Augustine crossed over to France, in order to receive from the prelates of that country, consecration as the first archbishop of Canterbury. His first object after his return, was to hold a conference with the representatives of the ancient British Church, the successors of those bishops who, as we have observed, had been driven by the incursions of the Saxons to seek refuge in the Welch mountains. Augustine appointed as the place of meeting a spot on the banks of the Severn. Seven Welch bishops, together with the abbot and monks of Bangor, willingly obeyed the summons, but the conference which ensued was unproductive of good results. They were unwilling to concede some points of discipline, in which their practice differed from that of the Roman Church^{*}: the conduct of Augustine was marked by too little conciliation¹; and the assembly dissolved without attaining the object for which it had been called. Nevertheless the progress of Christianity in Britain was very rapid, and before the conclusion of the seventh century the whole island had embraced the faith. The labours and dignity of Augustine were transferred to worthy successors, by whose untiring zeal the Gospel was even conveyed from Britain to neighbouring lands. Succathus founded the Church of Ireland; and from the famous monastery of Iona^m

SIXTH
CENTURY.

Conversion
of Ethel-
bert.

Conference
with the
British
bishops.

Progress of
Christianity
in Britain.

^{*} The observance of Easter, the administration of baptism, and other points. Vide on the mission of St. Austin, Hook's Life, and Churton's Early English Church, c. 11.

¹ Vide Hook's Life of Austin, vol. i. p. 427.

^m One of the Western Islands. This monastery was founded by St. Columba, A.D. 565.

SIXTH CENTURY. came forth those heralds of salvation who converted to Christianity the savage Highlanders and distant Teutonic tribes.

Gregory
the Great.

Gregory the Great, to whom Britain was indebted for the mission of Augustine, has been justly called the most able and remarkable prelate among many of the same name, who have in later ages maintained or increased the influence of the see of Rome. He ascended the pontifical chair in the year 590; and his first endeavours were directed to the redress of those laxities and corruptions which he found prevailing in the Church. He was distinguished by a fervent charity to the poorⁿ, a sincere zeal in the propagation of the faith^o, and diligence in maintaining ecclesiastical discipline^p. But his mind was at the same time clouded by ambition and superstitious credulity. He supported with a zeal worthy of a better cause, veneration for relics, and belief in the most absurd miracles said to be wrought at the tombs of martyrs. The doctrine of purgatory was maintained in his writings with a distinctness not to be found in any earlier works. At a time when the influence of the bishop of Rome was powerful either for good or evil, the talents, and energy, and genius of Gregory were employed in propagating unscriptural delusions^q.

His dispute
with the
patriarch
of Constantinople.

The title of œcumenic or universal patriarch had been bestowed upon the bishop of Constantinople by the Council of Chalcedon, and was claimed by his successors in the see. Gregory was filled with indignation at this assumption, and directed his nuncio

ⁿ Lib. v. Epist. 29, apud Baron., ann. 592.

^o Fleury, H. E., liv. xxxv. sect. 21.

^p Maimbourg; Fleury.

^q Vide Fleury, Hook's Life of Gregory, and Waddington, C. H., c. 10.

at the court of the East to protest with vigour against claims so anti-christian, and subversive of all true religion. In a letter which he himself addressed to the patriarch, he stigmatized the title of universal bishop as "execrable and satanic;" and declared that "whoever assumed it would thereby prove himself the minister of evil, and the forerunner of antichrist." These remonstrances produced little effect. Gregory then endeavoured, but without success, to induce the bishops of Alexandria and Antioch to co-operate with him in resisting the pretensions of the Constantinopolitan patriarch. The controversy terminated only with the death of Gregory himself, in the year 604.

While truth compels us to record the credulity which is conspicuous in the history of his life, it is a more grateful task to commemorate the numerous services which he rendered to the Church, and to seek some palliation of infirmity and error in the remembrance of his many virtues. Among the greatest of these services we may place the conversion of Britain; nor should we forget to record his zeal in promoting the solemnity and magnificence of the divine offices. He was particularly distinguished by his knowledge of music. Schools of choristers were established at Rome under his superintendence; and he composed those well-known chants in which the universal Church still celebrates the praises of God^r.

His ritual
institutions.

Gregory zealously favoured the efforts made during the latter part of this century to rekindle the dying embers of monastic piety. The most celebrated of these attempts was that made by Benedict of Nursia,

* Maimbourg, Pontif. S. Greg.

**SIXTH
CENTURY.**

The order
of St. Bene-
dict.

Character
of early
monas-
ticism.

in the year 531. He instituted a new and stringent rule, by which to repress the general relaxation of discipline and morality, and revive that holy abstinence which had distinguished monasticism in purer ages of the Church^a. The order of St. Benedict, which subsequently fell into such grievous corruptions, was, when originally founded, a useful and pious profession. Its monasteries were not, as they subsequently became, the strongholds of superstition and luxury. The time of their inmates was occupied in alternate devotion and manual labour. They gathered the harvests on the lands belonging to the convents; they formed roads across tracts of country otherwise impassable, and reclaimed by cultivation barren and profitless moors. The example of the apostle, who lived by the produce of his own labour, was in all things proposed as a model for their imitation. And while they thus fulfilled secular duties, they did not neglect spiritual study and meditation; by which they endeavoured to purify and consecrate their worldly employments^b. In ages of barbarism and ignorance, the monasteries became, in great degree, a refuge for the preservation of learning, and the maintenance of the poor. Their subsequent decline in usefulness and piety is no argument^c against the fact of their primitive advantage; and only increases the force of that just observation, "There never was anything by the wit of man so well devised, or sure established, which hath not been corrupted in continuance of time^d."

^a Hospinian, de Origine Monachatus, lib. iv. c. 5.

^b Muratori, Dissert. 37, 56.

^c Vide Waddington, chap. xix. p. 406, sqq.

^d Preface to Prayer-book on the Service of the Church.

THE SEVENTH CENTURY.

If the Church of Christ had hitherto suffered much from internal divisions, the assaults of her pagan and Jewish enemies, the incursions of false philosophy, and the progress of pernicious superstitions, she was now called to endure a yet heavier trial and a more destructive persecution. A religious impostor was soon to place his standard on the battlements of the Holy City. Churches whose faith and purity had been spoken of throughout the world, were soon to fall beneath Saracen invasion. Alexandria, Carthage, and the Churches of Northern Africa, where Christianity had gained her earliest triumphs, and had for centuries flourished amid reverses and afflictions; cities, from which had gone forth the teaching of Cyprian and Augustine, were henceforth to be distinguished only by their subjection to a false religion.

Mahomet was born about the year 575. When forty years old he first began to assert his pretended mission, and lay claim to authority as a prophet sent from God. His endeavours to gain followers were at first attended with but little result; for several years their number was but small, and their tenets unknown beyond the walls of Mecca. That success which would never have resulted from any method of conviction, was secured by the sword. The stormy politics of Arabia favoured the cause of the impostor. The battle of Cadesia, in the year 636, was the first

Mahom-
medanism.

Rise of the
Saracen
power.

SEVENTH CENTURY.	of those remarkable successes which prepared the way for the triumph of Mahommedanism ¹ . It was rapidly followed by that of Yermuk, in which a decisive victory was gained over the Christian forces ² . The Saracens now advanced with speed to besiege Jerusalem; and after a blockade of four months the Holy City opened her gates to admit them as victors. Then followed in rapid succession the conquest of Syria, and of Egypt, and of Northern Africa. The Christian world beheld with terror and astonishment successes so ominous, and regarded them as portents of divine wrath at the universal prevalence of iniquity. The efforts of Mahommedanism to obtain dominion, though soon about to receive a decided check, had not yet attained their full power. In the year 711 the Saracens, who had not before entered Europe, crossed over from Africa to Spain, and under the command of Tarik, encountered the Christian armies in the field of Xeres. Here success once more crowned the arms of the infidels. Roderic, the last of the Gothic kings, in escaping from the scene of combat, perished in the waters of the Guadalquivir. Toledo shortly afterwards surrendered, and the name of Spain was added to the list of subjugated nations. But the torrent of invasion was destined to flow still further. Ten years had hardly elapsed from the battle of Xeres, when Arles and Tours were startled by the summons to capitulate, and the kingdom of Burgundy was occupied by Moorish armies. In all human probability, France would in a few years have
Battle of Cadesia.	
Battle of Yermuk.	
Siege of Jerusalem.	
Conquest of Syria, Egypt, and Africa.	
Battle of Xeres.]	
Conquest of Spain.	
Invasion of France.	

¹ Gibbon's *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, vol. iii. c. 51. p. 449.

² *Idem*, p. 466.

shared the subjugation of Spain; and an historian has hazarded the not improbable suggestion, that the interpretation of the Koran might soon have been taught even in the schools of Oxford^a.

SEVENTH
CENTURY.

But from such calamities was Christendom delivered, humanly speaking, by the genius and courage of one man. Charles Martel, duke of the Franks, marched, in the year 732, against the Saracen forces, then encamped between Tours and Poitiers. "The nations of Asia, Africa, and Europe advanced with equal ardour to an encounter which would change the history of the world." After six days of preliminary skirmishing, the armies engaged in closer combat. It terminated in the complete victory of the Christians^b; and the invader was compelled to retreat precipitately from the kingdom, and retire beyond the Pyrenees. But although the adversary of the faith was thus deterred from making further inroads, the Church had, at the termination of the contest, to lament many and grievous losses. From that day to our own, lands once distinguished by piety and the knowledge of God, have been alienated from Christianity; under the withering influence of Mahommedanism, the fairest provinces of the East have become a wilderness; and the rites of superstition and imposture are still solemnized within the holy precincts of St. Sophia.

Battle of
Tours.

Effects of
the Saracen
conquests.

During the whole of this century, the Christian faith continued to progress in England. Theodore of Tarsus, consecrated in 668, was, as we are informed by Bede, the first archbishop of Canterbury to whom

Theodore.

^a Gibbon, *Decline and Fall*, vol. iii. p. 511. For a full account of the Mahommedan conquests, vide c. 50, sqq.

^b Roderic Toletan., c. 14.

SEVENTH
CENTURY.His Peni-
tential.

all the English Church yielded an undivided obedience. .

By his influence the parochial system was established, and ecclesiastical discipline secured by the canons of a national council convened at Hertford^c. That, however, which especially distinguished the name of Theodore, was the publication, in the year 680, of his famous Penitential. In this work he set forth the duties of the confessor, laid down different measures of contrition proportionate to the nature of different sins, and prescribed the forms of penance and absolution. Although he directly pronounced confession to God alone sufficient for salvation, it is clear that some of the injunctions contained in the Penitential were liable to great abuse^d. The plan of public confessions was superseded by those made to the priest alone; and in process of time every degree of sin was atoned for by vicarious alms and fasting. It was reserved for the increased superstition of a somewhat later age to invent the lucrative practice of indulgences.

Power of
the bishops.

We have already observed, that as early as the time of Cyprian, the power of the episcopal order was very great; and the institution of metropolitans in the fourth century tended to increase it further: Historians have carefully recounted the various causes which, during the first eight centuries, combined to raise the bishops far above the great body of the clergy in position and in dignity. Among these, the most prominent was undoubtedly their temporal wealth, and the enjoyment of those secular privileges bestowed on them by the liberality of Constantine. And to

^c Soames; Spelman's *Concilia*; Hook's *Life of Theodore*; Churton's *Early English Church*, ch. 4.

^d Muratori, *Dissert.* 68, quoted by Waddington, c. xxviii. p. 687

this it may be added, that they were subject to very slight ecclesiastical control; since the councils and provincial synods were almost exclusively composed of their own order, and directed by their influence.

The different reasons which conduced to this change influenced also to a great degree the exaltation of the see of Rome. It was favoured, besides, by the political circumstances of the times. After the separation of the Eastern and Western empires, some portion of that secular dominion which had once been held by the mistress of the world, still remained in her possession, and was exercised by the Roman bishop^e. While the virtues of the early pontiffs gained general admiration and respect^f, their claims to spiritual rule were not advanced with that arrogance which distinguishes the pretensions of their successors.

The Council of Autun, in the year 670, mentions the Creed commonly called the Athanasian, which it enjoins to be diligently repeated. This Creed appears to have been generally received by the Church about the end of the century. Many learned writers suppose that it was not composed by Athanasius himself, but ought to be regarded as the compilation of a somewhat later age^g.

^e Muratori Prolegom., tom. iii.; Acta Nic. Concil., tom. viii. p. 651; Gibbon, vol. iii. p. 359.

^f Waddington, c. x.

^g This is the opinion of Usher, Pearson, Cave, and others.

THE EIGHTH CENTURY.

Conver-
sion of
Germany.

Mission of
Boniface.

His mar-
tyrdom.
His zeal
for the
papacy.

At the time when the sword of the Mahomedan invader was wresting from the Eastern Church her earliest and most valued possessions, the light of Christian truth was fast spreading through the North, and the word of salvation proclaimed by devoted missionaries to the tribes of Germany. Of these, the most eminent was Winfred, or Boniface. He was born in England, but in the year 716 crossed over to Utrecht, in order to aid in the work of converting the heathen. In 723 he was consecrated by Pope Gregory the Second as missionary to the Germans east of the Rhine, and fifteen years afterwards was raised to the dignity of archbishop of Mayence. Much assistance in his labours was afforded by missionaries from England, who came over to join in the pious work; and by their united efforts Christianity was extended through the provinces of the Upper Rhine^h. While he and his clergy were engaged in baptizing a great multitude of converts on the river Bourde, in Friesland, they were attacked by the pagans, and in the tumult which followed suffered martyrdom, A. D. 755ⁱ.

The zeal and energy which marked the character of Boniface were, unhappily, employed at times for the advancement of purposes less worthy than the propagation of the faith. He was an eminent pro-

^h Churton's *Early English Church*, c. viii.; and Hook's *Life of Boniface*, vol. ii. p. 520 of *Eccl. Biogr.*

ⁱ Palmer's *Ecclesiastical History*, c. xiii. p. 141.

moter of papal influence, and persuaded the bishops of France and Germany to acknowledge the increasing authority of the Roman see^k. The cause which he laboured to advance was, however, much more effectually strengthened a few years afterwards by the bestowal of temporal dominion upon the popes. Pepin, mayor of the palace to the king of France, Childeric the Third, had long possessed the power, and eagerly desired the title, of royalty. He convened the states of the realm, and proposed that the imbecile Childeric should be dethroned, and that he himself should be elected his successor, if spiritual authority would sanction the design. Ambassadors were accordingly sent to Zachary, bishop of Rome, to enquire whether the law of God would permit the dethronement of a weak and indolent king, and the election of a successor more worthy of the throne? The reply of Zachary was favourable to the interest of Pepin; and the newly-elected monarch shortly afterwards embraced an opportunity of manifesting his gratitude to the papal see. When, in the year 753, the Lombards took possession of those Italian provinces included under the general title of the "Exarchate of Ravenna," and projected the subjugation of the entire peninsula, Stephen II., the successor of Zachary, applied to the court of France for protection and assistance^l. Pepin hastened to comply with the request of the pontiff. He crossed the Alps at the beginning of the following year, recovered the provinces from the Lombardic invaders, and then, desirous of testify-

EIGHTH
CENTURY.

Affairs of
France.

^k Mosheim, cent. VIII. ; Fleury, liv. xli.

^l Codex Carolinus, Ep. iii. p. 92.

EIGHTH
CENTURY.Donation
of Pepin.

ing still further his obligations to the chair of St. Peter, transferred to its occupants sovereignty over the entire Exarchate^m. This celebrated donation of Pepin greatly increased the papal power, and formed a substantial foundation, on which might be raised with greater security the splendid fabric of spiritual despotismⁿ.

Charle-
magne.

Charlemagne, the son and successor of Pepin, extended to the whole Church that protection which had hitherto only guarded the seat of an Italian bishop^o. Through the entire course of a long and prosperous reign, his earnest endeavours were directed to the promotion of the general welfare, by dispelling the prevalent ignorance, and extending learning and civilization among his barbarous subjects^p. For the accomplishment of these ends, he wisely availed himself of ecclesiastical agency. He saw that in a rude age, when all learning, whether secular or religious, rested entirely in the possession of the clergy, any attempt to accomplish his purpose would, without their co-operation, be wholly unsuccessful. Hence he increased their wealth, their dignity, and their privileges^q. "With a view to his own improvement and that of his people, and in order to diffuse a general ardour for literary pursuits, he collected round his court such persons as were most distinguished by abilities and erudition.

His cha-
racter.Support of
the clergy.

"In the prosecution of his noble designs, not only encouragement was offered, but commands were

^m Gibbon, *Decline and Fall*, c. xlix. p. 366.

ⁿ Berington's *History of the Middle Ages*, p. 84.

^o Waddington, c. x. p. 164.

^p Vide Gibbon's *Account of Charlemagne*, vol. iii. p. 376.

^q Fleury, *Hist. Eccl.*, livr. xlv. sect. 18.

issued. The bishops erected schools contiguous to their churches, whilst the monks established them in their monasteries. Nor did the imperial court, as it moved, fail to set the example in profane and theological researches, whilst it watched and rewarded the progress of science in all the seminaries of the empire^r.”

EIGHTH
CENTURY.

Promotion
of learning.

Charlemagne, while he increased the temporal power of the clergy, clearly saw the necessity of guarding against its undue exercise, and of promoting morality and piety, by the vigilant reformation of ecclesiastical discipline. The Council of Aix-la-Chapelle, which met under his presidency in the year 789, published eighty canons^s in support of this excellent design; and its injunctions were still more fully urged by a second council, which in 794 assembled at Francfort on the Maine. These measures secured the Church, during the life of Charlemagne, from any evil effects which might otherwise have resulted from the imperial beneficence. It was far otherwise during the rule of his degenerate successors. The vigour of a salutary discipline became relaxed, and the power alone survived, to hasten, by its perversion and abuse, a general prevalence of corruption.

Main-
tenance of
discipline.

We now turn to a consideration of that remarkable controversy about images, which especially agitated the Church during this century, and precipitated the division of the Eastern and Western communions.

Use of
images.

The early Christians were distinguished by their aversion to every kind of images, and their strict observance of the commandment by which the Jews

^r Berington's Literary History of the Middle Ages, p. 101, sqq.

^s Fleury, livr. xlv. and xlv. sect. 26.

EIGHTH
CENTURY.Unknown
to the early
Church.

Its origin.

Opposition
of Leo.

had been prohibited from forming any graven statue. Tertullian, and the first apologists of the faith, attacked with vigour that idolatrous folly which led men to bow down before the work of their own hands^t. For upwards of three centuries we find no mention of images in the Christian Church; and then it is only in the form of a canon, directly censuring their introduction^u. But it is certain that the error spread widely in the fourth century. It was at first suggested by expediency, and by a wish to obtain converts from heathenism. No method appeared more likely to gain this end than a compromise, which would permit a transference of devotion from the images of Jupiter to those of Christian saints. "At first the experiment was made with caution and scruple; and the venerable pictures were discreetly allowed to instruct the ignorant, to awaken the cold, and to gratify the prejudices of the heathen proselytes^x." Gregory the Great himself addressed a letter^y to the bishop of Marseilles, to point out the distinction between the use of images as an incitement to piety, and their abuse as objects of devotion. But a definition so subtle was ill adapted to general understanding, or to the character of the age. The use, and even the worship, of images was firmly established before the end of the sixth century; nor did it meet with any serious opposition until the year 726, when Leo the Isaurian ascended the throne of the Eastern empire. Throughout his reign he opposed with uncompromising vigour the prevalent super-

^t Lactantius, *Divin. Institut.*, lib. ii. c. 2.^u Canon. Concil. Illiberis.^x Gibbon, vol. iii. p. 352, c. xlix.^y Ep. Greg. ad Serenum Massiliensem.

stition; and undeterred by the opposition of the Roman see^a, persisted in the removal of images from the Christian temples. His son Copronymus faithfully followed his example; and, in order to obtain an authoritative condemnation of image-worship, called a council at Constantinople in the year 754, in which the conduct of the emperors was approved and vindicated^a. For many years the same zeal which actuated Leo was found in his successors; but in the year 787, the interests of superstition prevailed, and a council assembled at Nice, under the influence of the Empress Irene, reinstated the images in their former honours. This is accounted by the Greeks the seventh and last General Council. Its decisions were afterwards maintained by Theodora, and image-worship became a recognised and universal practice in the East. In France, and many other countries of the West, it was for many years strongly opposed; and upwards of three hundred bishops rejected, at the Synod of Francfort, the decrees of the Seventh Council^b.

EIGHTH
CENTURY.

Council of
Constantinople.

Second
Council
of Nice.

The Em-
press
Theodora.

It is a grateful task to turn from controversies which marred the peace, and superstitions which corrupted the purity, of the faith, to the labours and piety of those holy men, in whose hearts the love of God was shed abroad, and whose virtues, undistinguished on the page of history, constituted the real strength of the Church. Of these, few have been more eminent than Alcuin of Tours and the venerable Bede.

^a Vide the Epistles of Gregory II. to Leo the Isaurian, quoted in Gibbon, vol. iii. p. 353.

^a Fleury, livr. xliii. sect. 7.

^b Dupin, Nouv. Bibl. ii., Conc. Nic.; and Waddington, Ch. Hist., c. xi. p. 187, sqq.; Gibbon, c. xlix.

EIGHTH
CENTURY.

Bede.

Bede was born in Northumberland, about the year 673, and educated by Biscop, abbot of Jarrow. He was distinguished by his learning, and wrote many works on religious subjects, of which the most valuable is a history of the English Church from the mission of Augustine to his own times. It is, indeed, not free from that credulity which characterized the age, but the shining light of a sincere piety may be distinguished through the partial mist of superstition. "The works of Bede are numerous, and on various subjects; evincing extensive reading, an unbounded range of curiosity, unwearied industry, and great facility of composition^c." His life was spent within the precincts of the monastery of Jarrow, devoted to the meditation of the divine Word; and he was ever employed in teaching or in writing, and in the offices of conventual piety. On Ascension-day in the year 735, this faithful servant of God departed out of this life, in the assured hope of a better resurrection^d.

Alcuin.

Alcuin was born about the year of Bede's death, and when young was appointed to preside over the school which had been recently founded at York by the Archbishop Egbert^e. His fame for learning soon became great, even on the Continent; and in 783 Charlemagne invited him to his court, and induced him to undertake the education of his children. By the influence of Alcuin, learning and civilization were revived throughout the imperial dominions. The monasteries were diligently employed in copying manuscripts of the Holy Scriptures and homilies of the fathers. The study of grammar, rhetoric, and

^c Berington's Literary History of the Middle Ages, bk. ii. p. 94.

^d Vide Churton's Early English Church, c. vii. p. 145. ^e Idem, c. ix.

philosophy received support both from his encouragement and the example of his own varied learning^f. Alcuin died in the year 804. His later years were spent in the retirement of a monastery at Tours.

EIGHTH
CENTURY.

THE NINTH CENTURY.

THE early Church, while it unanimously held^g the doctrine of a Real Presence in the Sacrament of the Eucharist, did not pretend to define its nature. The language of the fathers is for the most part irreconcilable with the modern opinion of the Roman Church^h. Augustine especially maintained that there was in the Sacrament no corporal presence, and that a "spiritual understandingⁱ" was necessary to its worthy reception. It was not until the year 831 that any attempt was made to prescribe the manner in which the presence was to be understood. In that year, Paschase Radbert, a monk of Corbie, in Gaul, published a treatise "on the Body and Blood of Christ," which he subsequently presented to the Emperor Charles the Bald. In this work he maintained, that after the consecration of the elements in the Lord's Supper, the visible figure of the symbols alone remained; that the corporal presence of Christ was bestowed; and that His Body so given was the same

The Eu-
charist.

Paschase
Radbert
introduces
Transub-
stantiation.

^f Berington, p. 105; Cave, Hist. Lett.; Dupin, Eccl. Bibl.

^g Mosheim, cent. IX. p. 2.

^h Jewel, Ap. Angl.; Mason, bk. v. c. 6; Pearson.

ⁱ Augustin in Ps. xcvi.

NINTH
CENTURY.

Body which was born of the Virgin, and suffered upon the cross. This new doctrine excited general astonishment; and the Emperor Charles commissioned Ratramn and Joannes Scotus, two of the ablest disputants of the age, to undertake the defence of the spiritual presence. The opinions of Paschase do not appear to have attained much prevalence; and the controversy shortly afterwards ceased, to be renewed in the eleventh century, with greater vigour, and very different results.

Opposition
offered to
errors.

Before the edifice of error and superstition could be raised on the foundation of apostolic purity, its building was destined to encounter the stedfast opposition^{*} of many good men, who lamented the declining purity of the Church, and laboured to effect a reformation both in discipline and in doctrine. The warnings and remonstrances of Scotus and Ratramn were re-echoed by those faithful pastors who occupied the episcopal thrones of Mayence, Lyons, and Turin. Rabanus Maurus, archbishop of Mayence, opposed with determination the definitions of Paschase on the Eucharist. Claudius of Turin and Agobard of Lyons endeavoured to repress the various innovations on the purity of the faith which had been introduced by the credulity of later ages. They denied that images and relics were objects of veneration, or that any benefit could be derived from pilgrimages made to holy places. Claudius wrote many commentaries on the Scriptures, in which he asserted the doctrine of justification by faith, the fallibility of the Church, and the equality of all the apostles with St. Peter. But the attempts of these venerable men, however

Claude,
Agobard;
Rabanus
Maurus.

^{*} Milner, vol. iii. p. 212, sq.

valuable as a protest against the adulteration of Catholic truth, were insufficient to stem the torrent of an almost general superstition. NINTH
CENTURY.

Hincmar, who in the year 845 was raised to the see of Rheims, has been justly called the greatest and most eminent Churchman of the ninth century. His vigorous character and distinguished talents enabled him to obtain influence in the affairs both of the Church and state; and while he maintained at one time¹ ecclesiastical independence against the claims of the king of France, Lewis III., he asserted at another the rights of the Gallican Church against Pope Adrian II., and boldly reminded the successor of St. Peter that he did not combine the functions of priest and king^m. In 849 he assembled a council at Quiercy-sur-Oise, to condemn a monk named Godeschalchus, who had promulgated doctrines on the subject of predestination and divine grace, somewhat similar to those held by modern Calvinistsⁿ. When, in the year 876, Pope John VIII. nominated the archbishop of Sens his vicar in France and Germany, Hincmar protested in the name of the Gallican Church against an assumption so subversive of national independence. He presided over the see of Rheims for upwards of forty years, distinguished by integrity and diligence in the administration of his diocese, intrepid courage, and the care which he bestowed on the promotion of theological and secular learning^o. Hincmar
of Rheims.

In the latter object he was much assisted by recent

¹ Waddington, c. xiv. p. 247.

^m Fleury, livr. III. sect. 8.

ⁿ Idem, l. 49; Dupin, Hist. Eccl., cent. IX.

^o Vide Guizot's 28th Leçon de la Civil. en France.

NINTH
CENTURY.Revival
of mo-
nasticism.

revivals of monastic piety. Benedict of Anaine, born about the year 750, had successfully laboured to repress the luxury which even then had begun to prevail in conventual institutions, and to restore to the Church that austerity and ascetic zeal which inspired Basil, and Anthony, and the first hermits of the Eastern deserts. He revived in all its strictness the rule of Benedict of Nursia; and his regulations^r for the government of the monasteries received in the year 817 the sanction of the council assembled by Charlemagne at Aix-la-Chapelle. We shall hereafter notice the different branches which sprung from the order of St. Benedict.

Conversion
of Northern
Europe.

One of the most celebrated conventual foundations of the time was the abbey of Corbie^q, from whose gates went forth missionaries who converted to Christianity the greater part of Saxony and of Northern Europe. Anscarius^r conveyed the word of salvation to the courts of Denmark and Sweden. In the year 850 he became the first archbishop of Bremen. Friedrich surmounted the dangers of a perilous voyage to proclaim the knowledge of the true God to the remote and barbarous Icelanders^s. The darkness of the North was illumined by rays of spiritual light; and a conquest more glorious than that of temporal kings subdued the nations to the obedience of Jesus Christ.

^r Dugdale, vol. ii. p. 830; Waddington, p. 379.

^q Founded by Charlemagne for the conversion of Saxony.

^r Baronius, ann. 858; Fleury, livr. xlix. s. 21.

^s Pfeiffer's Iceland, vol. i.

THE TENTH CENTURY.

A VERY remarkable delusion prevailed in the Church during this century. Bernhard, a hermit of Thuringia, announced that the end of the world drew nigh; and that, at the expiration of a thousand years from the commencement of the Christian era, anti-christ should reign a short time upon the earth, previously to the dissolution of all things. He declared that this had been especially revealed to him from heaven, and exhorted all men to prepare themselves for the second advent of the Lord. The passage of Scripture from the misinterpretation of which the error arose, was the following:—"He laid hold on the old dragon, that old serpent, which is the devil and Satan, and bound him a thousand years . . . and shut him up, that he should deceive the nations no more till the thousand years be fulfilled; and after that he must be loosed a little season^t." The affirmations of Bernhard gained general credence; and as the time drew nigh, many transferred their property to the monasteries^u, or themselves undertook pilgrimages to the Holy Land, where it was believed that Christ would descend in glory to judge the assembled universe. "The year of terror, however, arrived, and passed away without any extraordinary convulsion; and at present it is chiefly remarkable as

Bernhard
preaches
Millen-
arianism.

^t Rev. xx. 2, 3.

^u Mosheim, cent. X. p. 2, ch. iii.

**TENTH
CENTURY.**

having terminated the most shameful century in the annals of Christianity*."

Corruption
of the
Roman
Church.

A Roman Catholic historian has expressed his wish that it were possible, in consistency with truth, to leave unrecorded the detestable errors and corruptions now engrafted on the original purity of the faith. "At this time," exclaims Cardinal Baronius, "how deformed, how frightful was the aspect of the Church of Rome! The Holy See had fallen under the tyranny of two profligate women, who appointed or displaced bishops at their will. . . . The canons were closed . . . ancient traditions proscribed . . . the usages of the former days wholly extinct. . . . I tremble when I speak of it: courtezans placed their gallants, who did not deserve even the name of popes, upon the chair of St. Peter†." Many remembered the prediction of Gregory the Great, that "whoever should assume the title of universal bishop would be the forerunner of antichrist." Of John XII., who was made pope at

Baronius.

sixteen years of age, Baronius says that he was "a monster of iniquity;" and compares him to "a raging animal, sent forth from the gates of hell" for the

Arnulphus.

desolation and torment of the Church‡. Arnulphus, bishop of Orleans, did not hesitate to declare his belief that the scriptural prediction was now fulfilled, which had announced the universal prevalence of iniquity; and that the "man of sin and son of perdition§" was even then enthroned in the temple of God. The disgraceful confusion which attended the election of the popes compelled the interference of

Papal
elections.

* Waddington, Ch. Hist., c. xv. p. 260.

† Baronii Ann., a. 1044. t. xi.

‡ Idem, Genebrard Chron., lib. iv., ed. Paris, 1585; Sismondi, Republ. Ital., c. iii.

§ 2 Thess. ii. 3.

the civil power : in 960, the emperor Otho the Great claimed a right of appointing the pontiff, and of regulating the affairs of the Holy See. A council held in the Lateran, in 964, allowed this claim, and secured to the emperor that prerogative, which he continued to exercise during the remainder of his life^b. The liberty of papal elections was not fully restored until the year 1059.

TENTH
CENTURY.

During these commotions, the Church of England was left to the councils of its own bishops, and maintained but very little intercourse with the Roman see^c. It was to a considerable degree uninfluenced by the corruptions of doctrine and practice which prevailed upon the Continent^d. When, in 787, the Second Council of Nice had recommended image-worship for the observance of Christians, the English bishops, in a letter drawn up by Alcuin, had declared that such worship was "an usage altogether execrated by the Churches of God." Alfred the Great did not acknowledge the supremacy of the pope. Transubstantiation was not held in the Anglo-Saxon Church; and more than one hundred years after Paschase Radbert had written his book on the Eucharist, Ælfric, ^{The Anglo-Saxon Church.} archbishop of Canterbury, composed a treatise, still extant, in which the doctrine of the English Church is clearly defined, and the spiritual nature of the Real Presence maintained. "When the Lord said, 'He that eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood hath everlasting life,' He bade not His disciples," says Ælfric, ^{Archbishop Ælfric.} "to eat the Body wherewith He was enclosed, nor to drink that Blood which He shed for us; but

^b Giannone, Stor. Nap., lib. viii.

^c Churton, c. xii. p. 214.

^d Vide Soames' Anglo-Saxon Church, in loc.

**TENTH
CENTURY.**

He meant that holy housel which is in a ghostly way His Body and His Blood; and he that tasteth it with believing heart hath everlasting life^e."

Archbishop
Dunstan,
A.D. 962.

The celibacy of the clergy and the increase of monasticism in England during this century is mainly attributable to the influence of Dunstan, who occupied the episcopal throne of Canterbury from the year 962 to 988. He may indeed be regarded as "the father of English monachism;" for the conventual foundations hitherto established had rather resembled colleges than regular monasteries^f. During his primacy many councils were assembled, and valuable canons enacted for the regulation of discipline. The biographers of Dunstan have diligently recorded his skill in music, the variety of his accomplishments, and the zeal with which he promoted learning^g. It is certain that the previous institutions of Alfred were still supported; and that, amid the general ignorance which prevailed on the Continent, able teachers continued to preside in the schools of Oxford^h.

State of
learning in
England.

The order
of Cluni.

The celebrated monastic order of Cluni was founded at the beginning of this century, by William, duke of Aquitaine. At first distinguished by the rigidity and asceticism of its rules, it gradually degenerated; and its claims to our notice in later ages rest mainly on the inordinate wealth which it acquired, and its devotion to the interests of the papal see. The spirit of piety and self-denial which animated the first founders of monasticism had long since passed away;

^e *Ælf.* *Archiep.*, quoted in Churton, c. xiv. p. 253.—"Housel" means "Eucharist;" "in a ghostly way," spiritually.

^f *Hook's Life of Dunstan*, p. 506.

^g *William of Malmesbury, De Gest. ii.*

^h *Berington's Literary Hist. of Middle Ages*, p. 132.

and numerous attempts made to revive it were un-attended by any permanent success. The impartial historian can with difficulty discover in the conventual institutions of this and later centuries, any considerable remains of the benefit derived from the system in purer times. Nevertheless it was not without its use. The convents still relieved the necessities of the poor, and administered the duties of hospitality. Many were enabled to find within their walls that solace and repose which was elsewhere denied them by the turbulence of the age. We are, too, indebted to the diligence of monkish chroniclers for the preservation of the most valuable records of ancient learning.

TENTH
CENTURY.

Benefits
of monas-
ticism.

THE ELEVENTH CENTURY.

THE councils of the popes during the earlier part of this century were influencedⁱ by the energy and talents of a monk named Hildebrand, who, on the death of Alexander II., in 1073, himself succeeded to the pontificate. We have already remarked that the papal elections were attended by so much confusion, as to render necessary the interference of the emperors. For some time they retained the power of arbitrary election, but subsequently the Roman clergy were permitted to choose popes, although their decisions were still to be referred to imperial authority for confirmation and approval. Hildebrand, however,

Nature of
papal
election.

ⁱ Pagi, Vit. Leo IX.

**ELEVENTH
CENTURY.**

Dispute
between
Gregory
VII. and
Henry IV.

determined to maintain the entire independence of the Holy See, and to this task he bent all the energies of an iron will and indomitable courage. He was successful in his efforts; the right of electing popes was wrested from the emperors, and transferred to the college of cardinals and the body of the Roman priesthood^k. The restless ambition of Gregory the Seventh (for by that title Hildebrand had ascended the papal throne) was next directed to the further increase of ecclesiastical power and the reformation of internal discipline. His attempts to secure both these objects aroused the resistance of Henry IV., emperor of Germany; and in the year 1074 commenced that memorable struggle between the imperial and papal powers, which afterwards exerted so great an influence in extending the temporal authority of the Church.

On the refusal of Henry to allow councils to meet in Germany for the repression of simony, Gregory sent legates to command his instant attendance at Rome, in order that he might "answer the many charges made against him^l;" and when the emperor persisted in disregarding the extravagant claims and novel pretensions of the Roman see, Gregory, in a council of one hundred and ten bishops, held at Rome, launched against him the terrors of excommunication, and declared his subjects absolved from their oath of fealty^m. The Saxons rose in arms against Henry, and a general rebellion menaced the security of his throne. Full of alarm, he determined to take a step hitherto unparalleled in the history of kings. Ac-

^k Mosheim, cent. IX. p. 11.

^l Waddington, ch. xvi. p. 280.

^m Pagi, Vit. Greg. VII. s. 42.

accompanied by a few attendants, he crossed the Alps in the depth of winter, and presented himself before Gregory, who was then residing at Canossa, a fortress near Parma, in order to implore, as a suppliant, the pontifical forgiveness. He advanced barefoot and bareheaded to the gate of the castle, and humbly sued for admittance. It was not immediately granted ; for three days and nights the proudest monarch in Europe remained fasting before the walls of Canossa. He was at length admitted, and received from the pope absolution, on promise of his future repentance.

ELEVENTH
CENTURY.

Humiliation
of Henry.

No event which had hitherto occurred in the history of the papacy tended to exalt its pretensions as much as this act of voluntary submission on the part of the emperor. Gregory availed himself of the opportunity to urge with greater vigour than before, still more extravagant claims to temporal power. The European sovereigns were reminded that they were tributary to the see of Rome. The king of France was informed that "both his kingdom and his soul were under the dominion of St. Peter, who had power to bind and to loose both in heaven and earth." William the Norman, after his conquest of England, was exhorted to place his newly-gained dominions under the protection of the apostolic chair. These claims were, indeed, generally opposed, and frequently unrecognised ; but their very assertion seemed to invest them with some degree of justice. The vast and unbounded ambition of Gregory aimed at nothing less than the union of the Western kingdoms into one confederacy, bound together by general interests, and by a common subjection to the successor of St. Peter^a.

Claims of
the papacy.

Designs of
Gregory.

^a For fuller accounts of the life of Gregory, vide Hook's *Life of Hildebrand*, Pagi, *Simondi*, *Waddington*, ch. xvi., and *Mosheim*, cent. XI.

**ELEVENTH
CENTURY.****The Latin
liturgy.**

As one means of attaining this remarkable design, Gregory commanded that the Latin language should alone be used in the public services of the Church; and this usage, although it perhaps conduced to unity, tended to increase superstition, and promote a blind subjection to the power by which its observance was enjoined. The pontiff also opposed the marriage of the clergy, and obtained from a council which he assembled at Rome, an injunction to the whole priesthood to observe celibacy.

Celibacy.**Transub-
stantiation.
Berenger.**

The doctrine of Paschase Radbert had gained considerable prevalence during the last century; and when, in the year 1045, Berenger, archdeacon of Angers, opposed it, Leo the Ninth had called a synod to declare Transubstantiation the doctrine of the Roman Church°. Berenger persisted in this opposition, and the controversy was brought before Gregory. But that pontiff, occupied in designs of universal dominion, was disinclined to agitate questions which might disturb the unity of the Church.

**Later years
of Gregory.**

The later years of this celebrated man were spent amid civil discords and confusions. The Emperor Henry found that he had derived no advantage from his humiliation at Canossa, and sullenly awaited an opportunity of inflicting upon Gregory a signal chastisement. In the year 1080, the death of his rival Rodolphus seemed to place Rome at his mercy. Twice he advanced to the siege of the "eternal city," and was repulsed with loss. A third attempt was, however, more successful, and Gregory was compelled to retire to the fortress of St. Angelo. Henry was unable long to retain his conquest, and the pope

again took possession of his see. He died in the year 1085^p. ELEVENTH CENTURY.

The barbarities inflicted by the Turks on those Christians who went to worship at the Holy Sepulchre at Jerusalem, aroused, in the year 1093, the indignation of a hermit named Peter, a native of Amiens in Picardy. Fired with zeal, he hastened from the Holy City to Rome, in order to lay before the pope letters from the Eastern patriarchs, representing the sufferings of the pilgrims, and imploring assistance and relief^q. Urban II., the successor of Gregory, immediately called a council at Placentia to consider the request; and shortly afterwards assembled another at Clermont, in France, where the greatest enthusiasm was manifested on behalf of the oppressed Oriental Church. Prelates and warriors eagerly pressed forward to take part in the holy war, which it was determined to wage with the infidels. A red cross, affixed to the garment of the pilgrims, gave the name of Croisade, or Crusade^r, to the memorable expedition. Our limited space will not permit us to detail the progress and movements of those successive armies, which from time to time went forth to encounter the Saracens, and recover the sepulchre of Christ. They are eloquently recorded in the pages of many historians; and few subjects are more worthy^s of the full consideration which it is impossible to bestow upon them within the limits of the present work.

During the two last centuries, many causes of dispute had arisen between the Churches of the East Division of the Eastern and Western Church.

^p Millot's History of France; Pagi, Vit. Greg.

^q Vide Hook's Life of Peter.

^s Berington, p. 178.

^r Cruz, a cross.

Peter the Hermit originates the first crusade.

Councils of Placentia and Clermont.

**ELEVENTH
CENTURY.**

Dissensions
of Photius
and Nicholas.

Final separation.

and West. As early as the eighth century, their peace was seriously disturbed by doctrinal controversy. The Latins held that the Holy Spirit proceeded from the Father and the Son; the Greeks, that the Spirit proceeded from the Father only. In the course of the following century, however, the dissensions created by this difference in doctrine were considerably effaced, when they received new strength on the accession, in the year 853, of the celebrated Photius to the patriarchal throne of Constantinople. In order that he might be raised to that dignity, Ignatius, the lawful bishop, was deposed by the Emperor Michael, and instantly appealed to the Roman pontiff for redress. Pope Nicholas the First commanded the re-institution of Ignatius, and the deposition of the usurping patriarch^t. Michael refused to comply; and the pope pronounced against Photius, and all who should assist him in his unrighteous claims, a solemn sentence of excommunication. This was speedily retorted by his haughty and unbending rival; and the schism thus created, continued to increase in violence during the following century. From 1054, when Leo the Ninth repeated against the patriarchs of the Eastern communion the anathema of his predecessor, the two Churches have never again been united. Their division still remains; a memorable example of that strife and discord which ever follows a departure from the principles of primitive and Catholic truth.

^t Mosheim, cent. IX. p. 11. c. iii.

THE TWELFTH CENTURY.

A NEW branch of the Benedictine Order was founded at the beginning of this century, by the celebrated St. Bernard, generally called "the last of the fathers." His first monastery was erected at Clairvaux in France^a. The fame of his sincere piety and asceticism soon spread far and wide; and the Order of Clairvaux possessed at the time of his death upwards of one hundred and sixty convents.

The character of St. Bernard combined talent and extreme vigour with a zealous and combined wish to restore the purity of the Church. He manifested to a remarkable degree in his own life that primitive self-denial and moral purity, which he recommended to others; and this example gave to his precepts an extent of influence probably greater than that of any other individual in any age. "The influence of Bernard over the minds of men of all classes seems to have been perfectly marvellous, and must in part be accounted for by the fact, that he lived up to the standard of religious excellence which was at that time set before the minds of men, so far as the infirmities of human nature would permit^b." This was, indeed, not untinctured by superstition. His devout prayers were addressed to the images of sainted mediators. His zeal in the repression of heresy, and the support of successive crusades, was

^a Ann. Cisterc., l. 6, 7. p. 79.

^b Hook, Eccl. Biogr., vol. ii. p. 292.

**TWELFTH
CENTURY.**

**The Im-
maculate
Conception.**

**State of the
Church.**

**Peter
Abelard.**

marked by little discretion; and he maintains the supremacy of the papal see with a zeal alike dangerous and equivocal⁷. On the other hand, it is not un-instructive to remark his steadfast opposition to the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception, which has recently been numbered by the Church of Rome among those of the "true faith." When, in 1136, the canons of Lyons introduced into the missal prayers recognising this novel⁸ dogma, "the last of the fathers" opposed it with an eloquence and determination not unworthy of a Cyprian or an Athanasius⁹. He maintained a spiritual, but no corporal, presence in the sacrament of the Eucharist.

In the year 1140, Bernard held a disputation with Peter Abelard, who had promulgated some singular and contradictory heresies on the Atonement, and the nature of original sin^b. But his denunciations were mainly directed against the iniquities and corruptions which pervaded the whole Church, from the throne of the Roman pontiff to the humblest monastic orders. "Ambition," he exclaimed, "strives to hold dominion. . . . The contagion creeps through the whole Church; the wider it spreads, the more hopeless becomes the remedy; the more deeply it penetrates, the more fatal is the disease. . . . The priests are ministers of Christ, and they are servants of antichrist. . . . O vanity of vanities, and as insane as it is vain! The Church is resplendent in its walls, it is destitute in its poor. . . it clothes its stones with gold, it leaves its children naked. The curious find wherewithal to be delighted;

⁷ Bernard de Consideratione, lib. ii.

⁸ Padre Paolo, Hist. Concil. Trident., l. ii.

⁹ Vid. Waddington, p. 694. ^b Milner, Ch. Hist., cent. XII. c. ii.

the starving cannot find wherewith to allay their starvation^c.”

TWELFTH
CENTURY.

It would have been well if these just and pious remonstrances had produced any permanent impression. After the death of St. Bernard, however, in 1153, the stream of ecclesiastical corruption, which they had momentarily checked, resumed its usual course.

The wealth and influence of the Roman see had been gradually increasing since the days of Gregory VII. The territorial endowments of the Holy See were increased in extent. Monarchs were led, by combined motives of credulity and of expediency, to recognise the interference of the pontiffs in disposing of kingdoms and regulating temporal events. Hence, when Innocent III. took possession of the chair in 1198, he found the minds of men less disposed to question papal pretensions than they had been at any previous epoch.

Increase of
the power
of the
Roman See.

Innocent
III.

Philippe Auguste, king of France, had lately divorced his queen, Isemburga. Innocent peremptorily commanded him to reinstate her in her dignity; and, upon the refusal of the king, laid under an interdict the entire realm. The churches were closed, the divine offices were suspended, and the corpses of the dead either remained unburied, or were consigned to unconsecrated ground. In an age of ignorance and superstition, this form of malediction was invested with mysterious terrors. Innocent at length prevailed, and Philippe was compelled to comply reluctantly with the papal mandate.

His dispute
with Phi-
lippe of
France.

This victory of the pontiff prepared the way for

^c Bernard *super Cantica, et aliter*, quoted by Waddington, p. 332, sqq.

**TWELFTH
CENTURY.**

With John
of England.

further conquests. John, a monarch of weak and feeble character, at that time sat upon the throne of England. On a vacancy of the see of Canterbury, the monks of that city had claimed the right to appoint an archbishop, and elected to the primacy^d John, bishop of Norwich, whose appointment was ratified by the king. When Innocent heard of this choice, he instantly reversed the election of the bishop, and commanded the institution of Stephen Langton, a cardinal of Rome. John refused. The kingdom was laid under an interdict, and its ruler was declared to be cut off from the communion of Christians. Further than this, his subjects were absolved from their allegiance; his dominions pronounced to be forfeited by disobedience, and, by virtue of the plenitude of power vested in the papal see, transferred to the king of France.

Humilia-
tion of
John, A.D.
1212.

Philippe immediately prepared to take possession of England; and the imbecile John was distracted between fear of degradation, by complying with the demands of the pope, and terror at the consequences of rejecting them. The latter feeling at last prevailed. Amid an innumerable concourse of people, who had assembled to witness his disgrace, the English king resigned at Dover his crown into the hands of the haughty legate Pandulf, and consented to receive it again as a gift from the Roman see. He expressed his wish to comply with all the demands of Innocent, and agreed to pay the annual tribute of a thousand marks, as an acknowledgment of his subjection to the successors of St. Peter^e.

^d This is not a full account of the transaction. Vide Pagl. Vit. Innoc. III., sect. xlix.; and Encyclopæd. in capite "Interdict."

^e Vide Hook's Life of Stephen Langton; and Waddington, c. xviii.

But at the very time when the power of the papacy seemed to be greatest, the elements of its future disorganization were rapidly forming; and in the little cloud of gathering heresy might be detected the portent of an approaching tempest. The valleys of Piedmont and the plains of Lombardy and France had long been traversed by preachers, who exhorted their inhabitants to turn from the superstitions of the Roman faith to the purity of earlier days. In 1110, Pierre de Bruys founded in Provence the sect of the Petrobrussians: in this work he was assisted by a monk named Henri, an Italian, whose followers afterwards assumed the name of Henricians. The teaching of Pierre and Henri appears to have been even more erroneous than that which they opposed^f. It made, however, so much progress, that St. Bernard determined to exert in its suppression all the force of his eloquence. Accompanied by legates from the pope, he passed through the south of France, exhorting everywhere the contumacious to "repent and return to the bosom of the Church." To the arguments of persuasion were, unhappily, added those of persecution. Henri died in prison, and Pierre de Bruys atoned for his errors at the stake.

TWELFTH
CENTURY.

The rise of
heresy.

The Petro-
brussians.

The Hen-
ricians.

The history of the other sects which about this time separated from the Roman Church, is involved in much obscurity, since we derive most of our information respecting their tenets from the writings of their enemies. It is, however, indisputable, that while they rejected many of the pernicious novelties which corrupted the integrity of the Church, they were them-

Character
of the early
sects.

^f Dupin, siècle XII. c. vi.

**TWELFTH
CENTURY.**

selves not free from great errors. They appear to have often held opinions founded upon the subtle and incongruous heresies of the East^s.

The Vaudois, or Waldenses. There were, nevertheless, some to whom this charge is not justly applicable. From the days of Claude of Turin, the inhabitants of the Piedmontese valleys had maintained the purity of the faith against the inroads of superstition; and their doctrines, which they declared to have been held by their ancestors ever since apostolic times^h, were free from the various delusions of the Bulgari, the Cathari, and other separatists. In 1180 they were extended by the labours of Peter Waldus, a native of Lyons, who diligently employed himself in translating and circulating the Scriptures.

The Albigenses.

In the south of France, the danger which threatened papal domination was great and imminent. Raymond, count of Thoulouse, openly declared his adhesion to the cause of the heretics. Innocent sent forth in alarm numerous missionaries from the court of Rome, to check the progress of the spiritual insurrection; "but the papacy had lost all authority with all classes, from the great feudal princes down to the cultivators of the soilⁱ;" the admonitions of the legates were unheeded, and their preaching was without success. Innocent saw that spiritual warfare would be unavailing, and, in an evil hour, resolved to unsheathe the material sword.

^s Milner, cent. XII.

^h Gilly's History of the Waldenses; Mosheim, cent. XII. pt. ii.

ⁱ Macaulay's Essay on Burke, Vol. Ess. ii. p. 132.

THE THIRTEENTH CENTURY.

IN the year 1207 a general crusade was proclaimed against the Waldenses, and the enjoyment of paradise promised to all who would bear arms forty days in the work of extirpating heresy^k! Two monks, named Dominic and Francis, established fraternities for the restoration of monastic austerities and the conversion of the Vaudois. Innocent saw that the existing Orders were unable to meet the exigencies of the times, or to ward off those perils which threatened the existence of the Romish system; he therefore gladly accepted the proffered services of the Mendicant or preaching friars, by which title the followers of Francis and Dominic were distinguished. Nor did he neglect to take various precautions. He assembled in the Lateran at Rome an august council of more than five hundred prelates, in order to obtain their united co-operation in the war, and define those articles of faith "which should distinguish the profession of the faithful from the perversity of the heretics." To Simon the Count de Montfort he promised the earldom of Thoulouse, if he would take part in the atrocious persecution; and the king of France was invited to share in the conquest of Piedmont^l. After a long and barbarous conflict, victory remained with the court of Rome; and, in order to guard against a recurrence of these perils, a strict inquisition was established at Thoulouse. All accused

Institution
of the Do-
minican
and Fran-
ciscan
Orders.

The Fourth
Council
of the
Lateran,
A.D. 1215.

^k Milner, vol. iii. 490.

^l Hallam, Middle Ages.

THIRTEENTH CENTURY. of heresy were to be judged by this tribunal; and its jurisdiction extended to the punishment of other offences, among which was included the possession by laymen of the holy Scriptures^m.

Establishment of the Inquisition.

Influence of the Mendicants.

Decrees of the Lateran Council.

Elevation of the host.

The termination of this dreadful contest amply vindicated the temporal craft and policy of Innocent; and it is difficult to conceive any measures more calculated than those which he adopted to secure the triumph of the papacy. Among these, the most efficient was undoubtedly the institution of the Mendicant Orders. "The new spiritual police was everywhere; no alley in a great city, no hamlet on a remote mountain, was unvisited by the begging friar. . . . The path of the heretic was beset by innumerable spies; and the Church, lately in danger of subversion, now appeared to be impregably fortified by the love, the reverence, and the terror of mankindⁿ."

We have remarked that the Lateran Council was convoked by Innocent to take measures for the suppression of heresy: but it is chiefly remarkable as having given an authority and sanction to those doctrines which form at the present day the peculiar system of the Roman Church. The word "transubstantiation" was applied to express the change of the elements in the sacrament of the Lord's Supper^o. With a belief in the corporal presence were soon connected many superstitious practices. Honorius III. introduced the elevation and adoration of the host^p. In 1246, a fanatic, named Juliana, declared that she had received^q from heaven a special revelation, en-

^m Fleury in loc.

ⁿ Macaulay, on Ranke, Vol. Ess. ii. p. 132.

^o "Transubstantiat pane in Corpus et vino in Sanguinem;" Lat. Concil. iv. can. 1. The word was first used by Stephen, bishop of Autun.

^p Fleury, livr. lxxviii. s. 24.

^q Mosheim, cent. XIII. pt. ii. c. 4; quoted by Waddington, p. 691.

joining the observance of the festival of the holy Sacrament, or Corpus Christi. About the same time was introduced the "communion in one kind" only, by the withdrawal of the cup from the laity. The Council of Lambeth, A.D. 1281, instructed the people that the reception of the bread was alone necessary to the validity of the sacred ordinance^r.

THIR-
TEENTH
CENTURY.

Festival
of Corpus
Christi.
With-
drawal of
the cup.

The twenty-first canon of the Lateran Council was the first authoritative decree which imposed the necessity of sacramental confession^s.

General
confession.

Innocent III. died in 1216, and bequeathed to his immediate successors, Honorius III. and Gregory IX., the work of extending that spiritual despotism, the influence of which had been so much increased by his own extraordinary talents. Both these popes engaged with zeal in promoting the crusades. Frederic II., emperor of Germany, had promised Innocent, shortly before the death of that pontiff, that he would take part in the holy war; and renewed that promise to Honorius^t. The monarch, however, delayed its fulfilment upon various pretexts, and persisted in postponing his departure for Palestine, notwithstanding the remonstrances of the pope. In 1227 Honorius died, and his successor Gregory urged the claims of the Holy See with such energy, that Frederic actually embarked for the East. He soon, however, returned on pretence of illness; and his disinclination to fulfil his engagement became so apparent, that the indignant Gregory pronounced against him the sentence of excommunication^u. In 1243, Innocent IV., who

The suc-
cessors of
Innocent.

Frederic II.

Excom-
municated
by Gregory
IX.

^r Henry, vol. iv. 259; Fleury.

^s Fleury, Hist. Eccl., livr. lxxviii., lxxix.

^t Vide Muratori, Ann., tom. x—xii.

^u Vide Fleury in loc.

THIR-
TEENTH
CENTURY.

And de-
posed by
Innocent
IV. at the
First Coun-
cil of Lyons.

on the death of that pontiff, had succeeded to his dignity and his ambition, ratified, in a council held at Lyons^v, the former decree of the papacy. He declared Frederic deprived of the imperial crown, and his subjects absolved from their allegiance. The turbulence of the German nobles gave effect and influence to this edict, and the remaining years of the emperor^w were spent amid continual warfare and commotions.

Boniface
VIII.

The highest pinnacle which papal power has ever attained was reached by Boniface VIII., who ascended the chair of St. Peter in 1294. He was engaged in a dispute with Philip the Fair, king of France, during the course of which he advanced claims more extraordinary than had ever excited the ambition of Gregory or Innocent. "The Roman pontiff," he exclaimed, "is established by God over kings and their dominions, sovereign chief of the hierarchy in the Church below, sitting tranquilly in the throne of judgment, and with his eyes dispelling all iniquity. . . . Wherefore we declare and pronounce that it is absolutely essential to the salvation of all men, that they be subject to the Roman bishop." The credulity of the age allowed the claim, and earthly thrones were indeed at the disposal of the successor of St. Peter. Boniface was enabled to reward the fidelity of two of his adherents by bestowing upon them the crowns of Hungary and Sardinia. The circumstances attending his death are remarkable. Philip of France, with whom he waged unceasing contests, incited William of Nogaret and Sciarra di Colonna, two

Extent of
papal
power.

^v Vide Waddington, c. xx. p. 418. Giannone, lib. xvii. c. 3; Siamondi, c. xvi.

enemies of Boniface, to attack the palace at Anagni, in Italy, where he was residing. The haughty pontiff, who laid claim to universal sovereignty, was suddenly reminded of his domestic insecurity by the entrance of rude and hostile warriors. "His attendants, indeed, rescued him from sacrilegious violence; but his imperious soul was wounded in a vital part; and Boniface expired at Rome in a frenzy of rage and revenge. His memory is 'stained with the glaring vices of avarice and pride; nor has the courage of a martyr promoted him to the honours of a saint'".

THIR-
TEENTH
CENTURY.

Death of
Boniface.

In order to replenish the exhausted coffers of the papal see, Boniface, in the year 1300, had proclaimed a plenary absolution from sin to all who should piously visit the tombs of the apostles in the Eternal City. Upwards of two millions of pilgrims responded to the invitation; and two priests stood night and day, with rakes in their hands, to collect without counting the heaps of gold and silver that were poured upon the altar of St. Paul^x. Emboldened by the success which attended this plan, the successors of Boniface instituted frequent jubilees; and multitudes of devotees hurried to Rome, in order to atone for sins by the merit of the holy pilgrimage.

The Roman
jubilees.

In no country were the usurpations of the papacy more frequent than in England. They often encountered the vigorous resistance of the kings and the opposition of the clergy, upon whose revenues were laid heavy imposts for the support of the Roman See, and whose benefices were bestowed by the popes upon Italians. In 1253, Innocent IV. commanded that

Papal en-
croach-
ments in
England.

^x Gibbon, vol. iv. p. 403; Sismondi, c. xxiv.; Pagi, Vit. Bon., viii. s. 70.
* John Villani; (l. viii. c. 36,) quoted by Muratori, vol. xi. p. 191.

THIR-
TEENTH
CENTURY.

Resisted by
Grosthète.

Letter of
Grosthète.

his nephew, Frederic di Lavania, should be invested with a canonry of Lincoln. The episcopal chair of that city was then occupied by the eminent Grosthète, who had on a former occasion withstood an attempt of Innocent to exact a tenth of the ecclesiastical property, under the pretence of a crusade. On receiving the mandate enjoining the institution of Lavania, he replied to the pope in a remarkable letter, which is still extant, refusing to comply with his commands. "Those injunctions," he wrote, "which are contrary to the apostolic, in zeal for your honour as for that of a father, I withstand and oppose. . . . There is no sin more opposed to the doctrine of the apostles and evangelists, or more odious to Christ, than to destroy souls by depriving them of the pastoral ministry. . . . Wherefore, since the commands I have received are so contrary to the holiness of the apostolic see, destructive to the souls of men, and against the Catholic faith, the very spirit of unity, the love of a son, and the obedience of a subject, command me to rebel⁷." Sewell, archbishop of York, Richard, bishop of Chichester, and other pious prelates, united with Grosthète in resisting the pontifical exactions. They were also checked in some degree, by the laws of successive kings, prohibiting foreign interference with the affairs of the realm, and upholding the independence of the English Church².

⁷ Vide Hook's *Life of Grosseteste*; Churton, *Early Engl. Ch.*, c. xx.; and Palmer's *Ch. Hist.*

² Bramhall, i. 136—143. Statute of *Præmunire*, 27 Edw. III. c. 1; Courtenay, *Parl. Hist.*, i. 219; Gibson's *Codex*, p. 42.

THE FOURTEENTH CENTURY.

A MEMORABLE event in the history of the Western Church occurred at the beginning of this century. In the conclave which assembled to elect a pope after the death of Boniface, the influence of Philip and of the French cardinals so greatly preponderated, that the archbishop of Bordeaux, a Frenchman, was raised by acclamation to the apostolic chair, by the title of Clement V. He immediately resolved to transfer the seat of government from Rome to Avignon.

Accession of
Clement V.
Transfer-
ence of the
papal resi-
dence to
Avignon.

Many motives influenced the pontiff in taking this measure; but the principal was to be found in the turbulent state of Italy. The Romans were especially distinguished by their continual commotions. St. Bernard justly described them as faithless to their superiors, intolerable to their equals, ungrateful to their benefactors, seditious and untractable, and odious alike to earth and heaven^a. The sanctity of the popes was not always a sufficient protection against insult and menace. On the other hand, central position, the protection of the French kings, and an honourable repose, recommended Avignon to Clement as a desirable refuge, to which he might with advantage transfer the papal residence^b. For upwards of seventy years Avignon became the metropolis of Christendom. Italian historians, in relating this event, and the consequences which afterwards resulted from

Character
of the
Romans.

^a Bernard de Consideratione, lib. iv. c. 2.

^b Valesius, p. 459.

FOUR-
TEENTH
CENTURY.

Abolition
of Knights
Templars.

Requests of
the Romans
that the
popes would
return from
Avignon.

it, have not hesitated to compare the secession of the popes from Rome with the Babylonian captivity^c. Clement was crowned at Lyons in the year 1305. His pontificate was distinguished by the abolition^d of the Order of the Knights Templars, which had been founded in 1118, for the protection of pilgrims visiting the Holy Sepulchre, and derived its name from the residence of the knights in the vicinity of the temple at Jerusalem. He was succeeded by John XXII., who died under an imputation of heresy^e. Then, from the year 1314 to 1376, Benedict XII., Clement VI., Innocent VI., Urban V., and Gregory XI., occupied the magnificent palaces which had been erected at Avignon for the accommodation of the papal court.

During the reign of the two latter pontiffs, the Romans had unceasingly complained of their absence from the rightful metropolis of the Christian world; and frequent embassies, sent beyond the Alps, pictured to Urban and Gregory the desolation of Rome, and urged their immediate return. Urban V. partly complied with the solicitations of the Romans, and resided in Italy for three years; but at the end of that time, his own impatience, or the wishes of the cardinals, recalled him to France, and he died at Avignon. His successor, Gregory XI., had hardly ascended the throne, when the Romans renewed their entreaties that he would return to the seat of his ancestors, and no longer permit the tombs of the apostles, venerated through so many generations, to be consigned to oblivion and decay^f. In case of his

^c Muratori; De Sede. The comparison was undoubtedly suggested by the similar duration of the captivity and the Avignon secession. Vide Waddington, c. xxii. p. 478.

^d Bzovius, ann. 1308.

^e Fleury, livr. xciv. sect. 21.

^f Petrarch, Mem., tom. i. p. 261—265, et alibi.

refusal to leave Avignon, they threatened that they would provide a pope for themselves, who should reside among them^g: Gregory was alarmed by this menace, and hastily departed for Rome. In 1376 he entered his capital, the "captivity" terminated, and the successor of St. Peter once more occupied his rightful seat.

FOUR-
TEENTH
CENTURY.

Return of
Gregory XI.

An event was now impending which hastened more than any other the decline and overthrow of papal dominion. On the death of Gregory, in 1378, twenty-two cardinals entered into conclave to elect a successor^h. The place in which they were assembled was soon encompassed by the arms of thirty thousand rebels, who tumultuously demanded the choice of an Italian pontiff. The cardinals replied that their election, in order to be valid, must not be influenced by popular compulsion: but piles of combustibles were heaped together under the walls of the conclave, with threats of conflagration in case of refusal; and their decision was precipitated by terror and alarm at the violence of the peopleⁱ. The archbishop of Bari was raised to the pontificate, by the title of Urban VI. The cardinals, however, took an early opportunity of retiring from the city, and of declaring the election of Urban null, in consequence of the intimidation of the Romans^k. They instantly proceeded to choose a new pontiff; and their unanimous vote recommended Robert, cardinal of Geneva, to the obedience of the Christian world. He assumed the title of Clement VII.

Great
schism of
the Roman
Catholic
Church.

Election of
Urban VI.

And of the
anti-pope
Clement
VII.

^g Muratori, tom. iii. pt. i. p. 610—712.

^h Of these eleven were French, and four Italians.

ⁱ Spondanus, ann. 1378, a. viii.

^k Vide livr. xvii. of Fleury.

FOUR-
TEENTH
CENTURY.

Continua-
tion of the
schism.

The schism thus created lasted more than forty years; and the successive popes who inherited the pretensions of Urban and Clement, divided between them the allegiance of nations. Savoy, Sicily, Cyprus, Arragon, Castile, and Navarre adhered to Clement, and after his death to Benedict XIII. Rome, Italy, Germany, Portugal, England, and the northern kingdoms, adopted the cause of Urban, who was succeeded by Boniface IX., Innocent VII., and Gregory XII.¹ We shall resume the history of the schism in the following chapter.

Wicliff.

John Wicliff was born at Wicliff, in Yorkshire, about the year 1324. In 1340 he entered the University of Oxford, where he soon became renowned for skill in dialectic and theological learning. He opposed the corruptions of the Church with unsparing energy; and his just strictures were directed against the Mendicant Orders, who, under a pretext of poverty, had in reality accumulated enormous wealth. In the great schism of the Roman Church and the anathemas of rival popes, he saw "the head of anti-christ cloven in twain, and the two parts made to fight against each other^m." Those denunciations, which might have fallen with but little effect upon the papacy, when united, derived vigour and influence from its divisions. Wicliff was supported by John, duke of Lancaster, who exhorted him to persevere in his good course. Richard Fitzralph, archbishop of Armagh, united with him in opposing the Mendicants, and even journeyed to Avignon in order to inform Clement VII. of the disorders and commotions which

Supported
by John of
Lancaster.

Fitzralph.

¹ Vide Gibbon's Hist., vol. iv. p. 427.

= Hook's Life of Wicliff, vol. viii. p. 768, of Eccl. Biogr.

they were causing in the Church. The primate of England himself favoured the attempts of Wicliff to procure reformation; the University of Oxford afforded him sympathy and assistance in repressing the pretensions of the begging friars; and little regard was paid to a papal bull which commanded the immediate arrest and punishment of the heretic. Thus encouraged, Wicliff opposed with increased determination the errors of the Roman system; and more especially transubstantiation, auricular confession, the practice of indulgences, and the compulsory celibacy of the clergy. He died in peace at his rectory of Lutterworth, A.D. 1384^a. Upwards of thirty years after that time, a decree of the Council of Constance commanded that his bones should be taken from the ground and burnt. The ashes were cast into an adjoining brook; which (says Fuller) "conveyed them into Avon, Avon into Severn, Severn into the narrow seas, they into the main ocean. And so the ashes of Wicliff are the emblem of his doctrine, which is now dispersed through all the world."

FOUR-
TEENTH
CENTURY.

Doctrines of
Wicliff.

His death.

Various controversies distracted the peace of the Church throughout the whole of this century. Peter the Lombard, Thomas Aquinas, the "Angelic," and Bonaventura, the "Seraphic," doctor, are celebrated as able disputants in the subtle speculations of the "scholastic" theology^o. The Franciscans and Dominicans, united in a common profession of mendicancy, were violently opposed to one another on the dogma of the Immaculate Conception. The Dominicans held

The Scho-
lastics.

Disputes
between
the Domi-
nicans and
Francis-
cans.

^a For a fuller account of Wicliff, vide Hook, *Le Bas' Life of Wicliff*, and Massingberd, *English Reform.*, c. vi. p. 117, sqq.

^o Vide Mosheim, cent. XIII., sqq.; and Dupin, *Nouv. Biblioth.*, in loc.

**FOUR-
TEENTH
CENTURY.**

The Fla-
gellants.

Catherine
and Brigida.

The Fra-
tricelli.

that the Blessed Virgin was not exempt from the stain of original sin; the Franciscans maintained the contrary opinion. For more than one hundred and fifty years the Church was divided on an inscrutable mystery, the solution of which was reserved for papal wisdom in the nineteenth century. From 1340 to 1350, Italy and Poland were traversed by a sect of fanatics named Flagellants, from their frequent and voluntary castigations^p: in 1351 they were destroyed by a crusade proclaimed against them by Clement VI.^q Several female enthusiasts, of whom the most celebrated were Catherine of Sienna, and Brigida of Sweden, obtained during this century great influence in the papal councils^r; and their pretensions to peculiar sanctity received the solemn approval of the Roman Church, which has accorded to them the honours of canonization. A section of the Franciscan Order, named Fratricelli, or Minorites, endeavoured to restore the rigour of primitive monasticism.

THE FIFTEENTH CENTURY.

Influence
of the
schism on
papal
power.

THE papacy was still divided; rival popes claimed the obedience of Christendom, and from their seats at Rome and Avignon resounded mutual anathemas and maledictions. Meanwhile the papal power was

^p Mosheim, cent. XIII. pt. ii. c. iii.; and cent. XIV. pt. ii. c. v.; quoted by Waddington, c. xxii. p. 505.

^q Esquivus, ann. 1351.

^r Spondannus, ann. 1370, sqq.

rapidly losing that influence which it had acquired during centuries of united and consistent aggression. FIFTEENTH CENTURY.

All exertions made to extinguish the schism were defeated by the ambition of the popes; and to every proposal for union they replied in evasive terms. The first councils for the peace of Christendom arose from the University of Paris and the doctors of the Sorbonne, then distinguished by their eloquence and learning. They proposed that the pretenders of Rome and Avignon should abdicate at the same time, and concede their claims in favour of a successor, who would enjoy undisputed rule and universal obedience. In 1408 the proposals of the university were conveyed to Benedict XIII., the pope of Avignon, and to Gregory XII., the pope of Rome, by a solemn embassy, which entreated them to resign their dignities, and thus restore peace to the divided Church^a. Both replied to the request in conciliating language; both agreed on the necessity of the scheme proposed, and secretly determined never to adopt it. It soon became evident that neither Gregory nor Benedict would yield, and that they were prepared to endanger, for a short remnant of life and power, the peace and salvation of the Christian world^t. Proposals of the University of Paris.

Embassy to the popes.

Their conduct.

A decided course now became necessary; and in 1409, the cardinals of Rome and Avignon united in assembling a council at Pisa, in Northern Italy, to decide the dispute. Prelates and ambassadors hastened to terminate the scandal of a protracted and perilous schism: a decree of the council declared Gregory and Benedict cut off from the communion of the Church, Council of Pisa, 1409.

^a L'Enfant, Concile de Pise, tom. i. p. 192.

^t Spondanus, ann. 1408, a. v.

FIFTEENTH
CENTURY.

Accession of
Alexander
V.

And of John
XXIII.
Opposition
of Gregory
XII. and
Benedict
XIII.

Council of
Constance,
1414.

and the Holy See vacant in consequence of their deposition. The cardinal of Milan was advanced to the pontificate, and took the title of Alexander V.^a

The newly-elected pope died in the following year, and was succeeded by Balthasar Cossa, a man of violent and warlike character, who took the name of John XXIII. The edict of the Council of Pisa had not, however, fully silenced the pretenders. Conflicting political and religious interests supported their cause; and although deposed and exiled, they continued to launch their excommunications at the successor of Alexander. Thus the previous disunion was increased: three popes claimed at one time the throne of St. Peter; and the only effectual remedy appeared to be the convocation of a general council, whose decisions should be binding on the Church, and invested with an authority superior to that of Pisa^x. John yielded with reluctance to the suggestions^y of Sigismond, emperor of Germany, and in the year 1414 opened the first session of the Council of Constance.

Three hundred prelates and a multitude of eminent laymen resorted to the city. The double object of the assembly was to terminate the schism and reform the discipline of the Church. That decree which had at Pisa condemned Gregory and Benedict, may appear at first sight to have rendered the former attempt unnecessary; but it was not so in reality, for the cause of either of the deposed pontiffs might at any time be raised to power by the fluctuating politics of Europe. The council was perplexed; and after long

^a On the histories of the Councils of Pisa and Constance, Vide L' Enfant in loc.

^x Waddington, c. xxiii. p. 531.

^y Leonardus Aretinus.

and anxious deliberations, resolved that the only effectual method of ending the schism would be to require the abdication of John. They did not indeed dispute his legitimacy, but desired to elect in his place a prelate whose character might command the obedience and respect of the universal Church. John expressed his willingness to assent, on condition that the anti-popes should also resign their pretensions. It is, however, probable that he was insincere in his professions of compliance; for shortly afterwards he escaped from Constance in disguise, and sought protection from the Duke of Austria. That potentate betrayed him to Sigismond and the council. He was immediately deposed and thrown into prison².

FIFTEENTH
CENTURY.

Proposes
the cession
of John.

Imprison-
ment of
John.

The efforts of the council were now directed to obtain the cession of Gregory and Benedict. The former pontiff yielded to its entreaties, and resigned his claims to the chair of St. Peter; but Benedict continued to resist the united persuasions of Christendom. Ferdinand of Arragon, Sigismond, and the ambassadors of the European powers, joined with the prelates in their endeavours to remove the only obstacle which now opposed the welfare and concord of the Church. The emperor in person undertook a journey from Constance to Perpignan, where Benedict was residing, in order to vanquish his inflexible obstinacy; but the pontiff still persisted in his refusal to resign, and declared himself to be the only pope who might lawfully claim the universal obedience of the faithful. The patience of the council was at length exhausted. In 1417 it ratified the last decrees of

Cession of
Gregory
XII.

Obstinacy
of Benedict
XIII.

* Maimbourg, Pagi, Brev.

FIFTEENTH
CENTURY.Excom-
municated
by the
council.Election of
Martin V.,
and ter-
mination of
the schism.

Pisa, and solemnly renounced all allegiance to the aged ecclesiastic whose perfidy and ambition had so long disturbed the peace of Christians^a. Immediately afterwards the cardinals entered into conclave; Otho Colonna, a noble Roman, was elected pope^b; the schism was terminated; and the council approached with confidence and pleasure the end of its arduous labours. In 1418 it was dissolved, after promulgating a decree which enjoined the assembling of another council within five years.

Thus was accomplished the first of those objects, for which the august concourse of princes and prelates had been convoked. The second, as we have observed, was the reformation of ecclesiastical discipline.

Internal
state of the
Church.

The demoralization and corruption of the Church during this century has never been disputed; and the historians of the Roman see have recorded with sorrow the general prevalence of iniquity. "The Church," exclaimed Pierre D'Ailly, the cardinal of Cambray, "has arrived at such a condition as to deserve to be governed only by the reprobate^c." "Faith, piety, and religion have grown so cold, I might almost say, have become so corrupted, that scarcely any vestiges of them remain. There is no law or commandment; judgment is perverted; the priests and the ancients have despised God^d." The decline of morals was general; and the profligacy of the clergy is attested by the indignant records of contemporary historians. Superstition and profanity were strangely mingled in the ceremonies of the

^a L'Enfant, Conc. de Constance, tom. ii.

^b Idem, tom. ii. p. 447, sqq.

^c Idem, tom. vii. s. 1.

^d Simon Begni, bishop of Modrusch, before the Fifth Council of Lateran.

Church. Divine honours were paid to the Blessed Virgin. Miraculous efficacy was ascribed to relics; and so great was the demand for their production, that upwards of nineteen thousand are said to have enriched the shrines of a single Church*. But of all the prevalent^f corruptions, none was so great as that implied in the doctrine of indulgences. It was asserted that "Christ had instituted a treasury for the benefit of the Church, which not even eternity itself should exhaust; that this treasure had been further augmented by the supererogatory merits of the saints. . . . That its administration was committed to the vicar of Christ, and that its merits were applicable to every sinner for transgressions committed after baptism." Hence every crime was commuted for a given price; and men were taught to believe that gold would purchase a perfect absolution from all the penalties of sin.

FIFTEENTH
CENTURY.

Doctrine
of indul-
gences.

The Council of Constance appointed a "college of reform" to consider plans for the reformation of the most flagrant abuses, and for the purification of the Roman court. Many useful measures were adopted at its suggestion, which, however, rather tended to repress the simony and avarice of the pontiffs, than to urge on with vigour those general improvements which were necessary to the safety of the Church^g. Nor will this on due consideration, appear singular; for the fathers of Constance were unable to detect the

Reforma-
tion at-
tempted at
Constance.

* All Saints' Church at Wittenburg. Vide Myconius, Seckendorf, Müller's Religien, vol. iii. p. 22.

^f "La discipline ecclésiastique s'étoit relâchée par toute la terre : les désordres et les abus portés jusqu'aux environs de l'autel faisoient gémir les bons, les humilioient, les pressoient, à se rendre encore meilleurs — mais ils firent un autre effet sur les esprits aigres et superbes." Bossuet, Hist. des Variat., livr. xi. p. 204.

^g Von der Hardt, Hist. Council of Constance.

FIFTEENTH
CENTURY.

Its cha-
racter.

real cause of the prevalent evils. Their wish to remove them was in no degree dictated by doubts as to the wisdom, even the infallibility, of the Church, or the truth of those doctrines from which the evils proceeded^h. A striking illustration of this fact is to be found in their treatment of those bolder reformers who advocated an entire reformation in doctrine and discipline.

John Huss,
A.D. 1400.

The writings of Wicliffe had been conveyed to Bohemia by some of the attendants of Anne, a princess of that country, and widow of Richard II. of England, who had returned, after the death of her husband, to her native land. The University of Prague was at that time distinguished by the learning of its professors; and its rector, John of Huss, had obtained especial celebrity by his eloquence and varied talents. In 1400 he was appointed confessor to Sophia, queen of Bohemia. His sermons, which he delivered in the vulgar tongue, were directed against the papal and monastic corruptions; but hitherto no suspicion of heresy had attached to his name. In 1409, the prominent and somewhat injudicious part which he took in some disputes which prevailed in the university, exposed him to the hatred of the German doctors, and of Subinco, archbishop of Prague. He was now surrounded by enemies, who eagerly watched every opportunity of destroying him; and was shortly afterwards accused to John XXIII. of maintaining doctrinesⁱ opposed to those of the Church. A decree of the Council of Constance com-

Summoned
to Con-
stance.

^h Waddington, Ch. Hist., c. xxiv. p. 558, sqq.

ⁱ For the life of John Huss, vide Hook's Life, vol. vi. p. 228; Waddington, c. xxv.; L'Enfant; the continuator of Fleury; and Beausobre's Hist. Ref., c. iii.

manded his appearance before the assembled fathers, that he might explain his opinions, and declare his renunciation of the heresies of Wicliffe; to which, as his adversaries asserted, he had professed adherence. Huss determined to obey the mandate; and, after procuring an act of safe conduct from the emperor, hastened to Constance. Here, notwithstanding the remonstrances of Sigismond and of the pope himself, he was soon placed in strict confinement; and it was evident that the malignity of his enemies had already condemned him to the flames. The promise which had been given, that he should return unharmed to Bohemia, was vainly urged by his friends in his defence; and the council passed a decree, that no faith should be kept with heretics. Their subsequent proceedings were wholly in accordance with this iniquitous precept. Huss was not permitted to speak in his own defence; and after a partial trial, was condemned to be degraded from holy orders, and then given up to the secular power for execution. He suffered with the same piety and endurance which had always marked his character; and his last prayers at the stake were offered for the repentance and forgiveness of his enemies^k. In the following year, Jerome of Prague, a disciple of Huss, and hardly inferior to him either in eminence or learning, was committed to the flames on the same spot, and by a decree of the same council. Thus, in the very session in which the assembled prelates denounced with unsparing severity the immoralities of the papal court,

FIFTEENTH
CENTURY.

Confined.

Con-
demned.

And exe-
cuted.
Jerome of
Prague.

^k Contin. of Fleury, livr. ciii.

**FIFTEENTH
CENTURY.**

they did not hesitate to condemn as heretics those true reformers who wished to apply the only effectual and permanent remedy to the prevailing corruptions.

Martin V.

We have seen that Martin V. was elected pope on the deposition of John XXIII. His accession was viewed with delight by Sigismond and the reformers of Constance; and it was hoped, but, alas! in vain, that the opposition which, while a cardinal, he had ever manifested to ecclesiastical abuses, would be profitably exerted in restoring the purity of the Church. It had been at one time proposed in the council to defer the election of the pontiff until the work of reformation should have been accomplished; but this design was opposed by the cardinals, and the whole body of the Italian clergy, who objected that the Church could not be represented by a council without the pope. Martin was therefore elected while the deliberations of the "college of reform" were pending. Alarmed at its design of abolishing some of the most cherished abuses of the papacy, he hastened to dissolve the council, in defiance of the imperial remonstrances; and under the pretence that the affairs of the Holy See required his presence, he withdrew from the turbulent cities of Switzerland to the repose and security of Italy. Resistance was in vain: the council beheld with sorrow and indignation that overthrow of their power which they were unable to prevent. When in 1418, its members turned away from the gates of Constance, their principal consolation was that they had succeeded in passing an edict which enjoined, as a perpetual law of the Church,

Dissolves
the Council
of Con-
stance.

the assembling of general councils for the regulation of discipline¹. FIFTEENTH CENTURY.

The pontificate of Martin was not distinguished by any remarkable event. His conduct towards his predecessor, John, was marked by much kindness and generosity; and he appears to have been possessed of private virtues, rather than of that public talent which, in times of such exigency, was necessary for the welfare of the Church. With reluctance he summoned the prelates of the West to Basle, where it was resolved to hold a council which might resume the deliberations interrupted at Constance. While, however, they were assembling, Martin suddenly died, on the fifteenth of February, 1431. Character of Martin.

“At this crisis, the character of the successor to the chair was of consequence almost incalculable to the Church. The Council of Basle was irrevocably summoned; and its principles, its policy, and its power could be easily foreseen from the experience of Constance^m.” The doctrines of Huss had taken deep root in Bohemia; the united voice of the nation demanded the restitution of the sacramental cup to the laity, and the abolition of many asserted grievances. A third peril which threatened the papacy was to be found in the total separation between the Eastern and Western communions. Yet at a time when the very safety of the Roman Church seemed to depend in great measure on the conduct of its “infallible” head, the reins of power were committed to the unskilful hands of Eugenius IV. His death.
Perils of the Roman See.

¹ Once every ten years; but in consideration of the state of the Church, the next council was to be summoned within five years.

^m Waddington, c. xxiv. p. 565.

Election of Eugenius IV.

**FIFTEENTH
CENTURY.**

Cardinal
Julian
Cesarini.

His advice.

Conduct of
Eugenius.

His first endeavours were directed to prevent the assembling of the Council of Basle. It soon, however, proved that this would be difficult, and almost impossible: Eugenius then attempted to transfer it to Bologna, where he considered that its deliberations would be in a great degree guided by papal influence. The president of the council, who had been appointed by Martin shortly before his death, was the Cardinal Julian, a man of great talents and intrepid courage. He boldly refused, in the name of the assembled fathers, to comply with the pontifical command; and the first edicts enacted at Basle ratified those of Constance, which had declared the authority of a general council superior to that of a popeⁿ. Julian urged with vigour the necessity of reformation "If you dissolve this assembly," he exclaimed, "what will the whole world say when it learns the act? Many councils have been celebrated in our days, from which no reform has proceeded; the nations are expecting that some shall result from this. If the clergy of Germany are not quickly reformed, another and a more terrible heresy will succeed that of Bohemia; for it will be said that the clergy are incorrigible, and will apply no remedy to these evils. . . . I see that the axe is at the root: the tree begins to bend; and we, instead of supporting it with all our power, only accelerate its fall^p." These words of truth and eloquence were not without effect on the council. It was resolved to resist the assumptions of Eugenius; and that pontiff, finding that his denunciations produced little effect, gave his reluctant consent to sanction the decrees of

ⁿ Labbæus, Hist. Concil. Basil.

^p Vide Hook, Life of Luther; Vol. vii. of Eccl. Biogr., p. 122, sqq.

Basle, and in 1434 sent two legates to assist in the deliberations of the fathers.

FIFTEENTH
CENTURY.

No long time, however, had elapsed, before the disputes between Eugenius and the council were resumed. The council cited the pope to appear at Basle, and account for his vexatious opposition to all their measures for the reform of the Church. The pope retorted by declaring the council dissolved, and transferred to Ferrara. In 1438 he held the first session of an assembly in the latter city. Here he was joined by Cardinal Julian, who had suddenly seceded from Basle, and passed over to the papal party. The example of this prelate was not followed by many of his brethren; and its only effect seems to have been an increase of vigour and determination in the council which he had deserted: his place was supplied by the Cardinal of Arles, a man of equal, or even superior, talent; and in the course of the following year the council gained sufficient power to depose Eugenius^p, and elect in his stead Amadeus, duke of Savoy, who took the title of Felix V. The Church was thus threatened by the scandals and dangers of a second schism; for Eugenius still retained the obedience of Italy. But on his death, in 1447, Felix consented to resign all claims to the pontifical chair, in order that the peace of Christendom might not again be disturbed by a disputed succession. The danger was thus happily averted; and Nicholas V., who had been elected pope on the death of Eugenius, obtained undisputed possession of the power which his predecessor had been compelled to share with Felix. Nicholas

Disputes
between the
pope and
the council.

Deposition
of Euge-
nius, 1439.

Accession
of Felix V.

Resigns in
favour of
Nicholas V.

^p Æneas Sylvius, de Gestis Conc. Basil.

FIFTEENTH
CENTURY.Calixtus
III.
Pius II.His re-
tractation.His oppo-
sition to the
Turks.

His death.

was distinguished by many public and private virtues ; but especially by his patronage of learning, the diligence with which he collected the most valuable manuscripts and records of antiquity, and promoted the restoration of architecture and science. He endeavoured, but without success, to revive the crusades, and to engage the kingdoms of the West in an attempt to rescue Constantinople from the Turks. He died in 1455. Calixtus III. then ascended the chair ; but reigned only three years, and was succeeded by Pius II. This pontiff had been remarkable, when a cardinal, for his zeal in declaiming against the abuses of the Church. After his elevation, he revoked all that he had once written in favour of the Council of Basle, and solemnly retracted his former opinions as contrary to truth, and injurious to the dignity of the Holy See. He renewed the designs of Nicholas to oppose the power of the Turks, who, to the alarm of Europe, had lately taken Constantinople, and were rapidly approaching the shores of Italy. Although infirm and aged, Pius resolved himself to conduct the expedition which was undertaken for the defence of Christendom. "It may be," he exclaimed, "that when the monarchs behold their master and father,—the Roman pontiff, the vicar of Jesus Christ,—an infirm old man, advancing to the war, they will take up arms through shame, and valiantly defend our holy faith¹." Everything was prepared for his departure to the East, when he died at Ancona, A.D. 1464.

There is little worthy of record in the pontificates of Paul II., Sixtus IV., and Innocent VIII., who presided over the papal see from 1464 to 1492, if we

¹ Raynaldus, ann. 1463.

except the increasing demoralization of the Church. In the latter year, Innocent was succeeded by Alexander VI.; here, at length, we are arrested by the utmost limits which have been assigned to papal and to human depravity^r. Rome was polluted by crimes which, were they not recorded by contemporary historians, might justly be deemed incredible. Iniquity was enthroned in the seat of the pontiffs; and the "eternal city" beheld with horror immoralities which had never been equalled in the groves of heathenism. The benefices of the Church were bestowed upon the illegitimate offspring of Alexander; and his second son, Cæsar Borgia, may be ranked with the Sullæ and Neros of antiquity. At length the pope fell a victim to poison, which he had prepared for one of his cardinals^s. "All Rome," says Guiccardini, "rushed to St. Peter's to behold his corpse, with incredible avidity; nor could any satiate his eyes with gazing on this dead serpent, who, by his ambition and cruelty, had empoisoned the whole world^t."

FIFTEENTH
CENTURY.

Increase
of cor-
ruptions.
Alexan-
der VI.

His cha-
racter.

And death.

We cannot recount, within the narrow limits of this work, all the various attempts made during the fifteenth century either to reform or subvert the Church; but it is proper to make some mention of those individuals who were especially distinguished as reformers. Among these was John of Wesalia, a learned theologian, who preached against the innovations of the Roman See, and more especially the practice of indulgences; and John Wesselus, of Groningen, who has justly been called the fore-

Reformers.
John of
Wesalia.

John
Wesselus.

^r Waddington, c. xxvii. p. 650.

^s "E messe la scutola venenata avanti il papa." Sanato: Vide D'Aubigné, p. 23, Hist. Ref.

^t Vide Sismondi; and Guiccardini, Storia d'Italia, lib. i.; Gordon and Tomasi; Dupin, iii. 44.

FIFTEENTH
CENTURY.

runner of Luther^u. The names of Gerson and Savonarola are still more deservedly eminent.

Gerson.

Gerson is described to us as the most excellent doctor of the Church, whose writings decided the most enlightened theologians, and who had been raised above others in talents to combat the errors of the age^x. He was the chancellor of the university of Paris at the time when that celebrated body was engaged in closing the papal schism. His great talents were conspicuous in the Councils of Pisa and Constance, where his exhortations had much influence with the assembled prelates, in urging them to maintain the independence of the Church^y. The most famous of his treatises^z maintained the authority of the councils, and defended their conduct in deposing the rival popes. Gerson died at Lyons, in the year 1429.

Savonarola.

Savonarola was born in 1452, and in 1475 entered a Dominican monastery at Bologna, where he soon became noted for his rigid asceticism and earnest piety^a. The general repression of learning and of divine truth, the immoralities of the monastic orders, and the luxury of the higher clergy roused his indignation. He revived both in example and precept the austere rule of St. Dominic. He depicted in glowing terms the miseries and corruptions of the age, the confusions and approaching desolation of the Church. In 1489 he removed from Bologna to Florence. Here his exertions in the cause of truth^b were re-

^u Semler, cent. XV. sect. iv. p. 212—219.

^x Zarbarella. Vide Hook's *Life of Gerson*, p. 300.

^y Vide Gersoni Opera, given in Von der Hardt, tom. i. *Hist. Concil. Const.*

^z "De Auferibilitate Papæ."

^a Batesius, ed. Lond. 1681, p. 112.

^b Vide his "Prediche sopra il Salmo, 'Quam bonus Israel,'" &c.; from which it is evident that he held the doctrine of justification by faith.

doubled: he harangued assembled thousands in the public squares, bitterly denouncing the authors of those temporal and spiritual evils which afflicted Italy^c. Alexander VI., who then occupied the papal chair, and the family of the Medici, who ruled at Florence, combined for the destruction of one equally dangerous for his talents and his virtues: in 1497 the infamous pontiff launched a brief against him; and in 1498 the torture and the flames closed the career of the reformer^d.

FIFTEENTH
CENTURY.

THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY.

1500—1519.

WE have seen that the dissensions between the Churches of the East and West, which were aggravated by the mutual ambition of the patriarch Photius and Nicholas I., ended during the pontificate of Leo IX., in an entire schism. Necessity rather than inclination has led us to consider the history of Latin Christianity since the eleventh century, as distinct from that of the Eastern Church. It will now be desirable to take a retrospective view, and record with brevity the most remarkable events which happened in the East after its separation from the communion of Rome.

Retro-
spective
view of the
Eastern
Church.

^c Hook's Life of Savonarola, vol. Eccl. Biogr. viii. p. 346.

^d D'Aubigné, p. 37.

**SIXTEENTH
CENTURY.**Latin king-
dom of
Jerusalem.Its ter-
mination.Kingdom of
Constanti-
nople.Dissen-
sions of
the Latins.Continu-
ance of the
schism.

At the close of the eleventh century the armies of the crusaders delivered Jerusalem from the Turks; and the Sepulchre of Christ, rescued from their hands, was committed by the pope to the guardianship of a Latin hierarchy. The Greek clergy beheld with indignation their functions usurped by foreigners and aliens, and Latin prelates seated on the patriarchal thrones of Jerusalem and Antioch^e. In 1187 the dominion of the Christians in the Holy City ended: the clergy who had accompanied the crusaders retired, and left the Greeks to the undisputed possession of their former dignities. The popes, however, relaxed no endeavours to regain their power in the East; and when, in 1204, Constantinople was taken by the crusaders, not a moment was lost in establishing the Latin liturgy, in encouraging eminent ecclesiastics to emigrate to the East, and firmly to plant in the Churches and schools of Constantinople the doctrines, the discipline, the polity, and the learning of the West^f. But ten years had hardly elapsed, when a violent dispute arose between the legates of Pope Innocent III. and the Latin patriarch of Constantinople, on the constitution of the Oriental chapters. When the Greeks beheld the Church to which they had been invited to declare their allegiance, thus torn by internal schisms, the last argument in favour of its superior excellence appeared withdrawn; and the hatred with which they had ever regarded the polity of Rome increased in depth and intensity. For upwards of two hundred years they rejected with indignation the proposals made to them from time to time^g to unite with the Western heretics.

^e Fleury, *Hist. Eccl.*, c. vi.^f Waddington, c. xxvi. p. 615. ^g Raynaldus ann.; Fleury in loc.

The first attempt to reconcile them to the communion of Rome was made in 1233, by Gregory IX.; and sixteen years afterwards Innocent IV. sent John of Parma, the general of the Franciscans, with ineffectual overtures of peace and re-union. It was not until the pontificate of Eugenius IV. that the papal efforts were crowned with success. That pontiff invited John Palæologus, emperor of the East, and the patriarchs of the Greek communion, to attend the council which, in opposition to that of Basle, he had lately convoked at Ferrara, where, he represented, the schisms which had so long afflicted the Church might be closed by mutual forbearance and the exercise of a holy charity^h.

The Greeks determined to accept the proposal. In 1437, the emperor, the patriarchs of Alexandria, Jerusalem, and Antioch, the primate of Russia, twenty other bishops, and a numerous suite, embarked at Constantinople in eight vessels; and after a tedious voyage of more than two months, cast anchor before Venice. Here they were hospitably entertained by the doge and senators of that city, which was then famous throughout the world for its power and magnificenceⁱ. Thence they continued their journey to Ferrara. Eugenius received them with unwonted pomp^k; and the kiss of charity was, after an interval of three centuries, exchanged between the prelates of the Greek and Latin Church. The first session of the council was opened soon afterwards; but Ferrara was found to be inconvenient for so large and sump-

SIXTEENTH
CENTURY.

Embassy of
the Greeks
to the
Council of
Ferrara,
A.D. 1437.

^h For the history of the negotiations, vide the Annals of Syropulus, sect. iii., iv.

ⁱ Mémoires de Philippe de Comines, lib. vii. c. 18.

^k Vide Gibbon, Decl. and Fall, ch. lxi., vol. iv. p. 325.

SIXTEENTH CENTURY. tuous an assemblage. In 1439, Eugenius removed it to Florence; and here, after the labour of nine months, and the debates of twenty-five sessions, he was enabled to pronounce, amid the rejoicing of the congregated prelates, the termination of the schism, and the re-union of the Churches of the East and West.

Removed to
Florence.

Schism
terminated.

Differences
proposed
to be
arranged.

The deliberations which had ended in this happy result were conducted on the papal side by the eloquent Cardinal Julian, Andreas, bishop of Colossus, and other doctors; on that of the Greeks by Marc of Ephesus and Bessarion of Nice¹. The four principal differences between the two Churches, which they proposed to reconcile, were, 1. The use of unleavened bread in the communion of Christ's Body; 2. the nature of purgatory; 3. the supremacy of the pope; 4. the single or double procession of the Holy Ghost. On the sixth of June, 1439, they reported to Eugenius that, with the exception of Marc of Ephesus, they had agreed to draw up a confession of faith on these points, which should express in general terms the common belief of the whole Catholic Church. The pontiff eagerly ratified a "decree of union;" the object of the council was accomplished, and in the following year the Greeks returned to Constantinople².

Discontent
of the
Greeks.

Their arrival in the capital of the East was the signal for a general outbreak of popular fury. The great body of the priesthood and people regarded with indignation the concessions made to the Latins

¹ For the character of this celebrated cardinal, vide Platina, *Panegy.* in Bessarion, and Berington, *Lit. Hist.*, p. 324.

² Waddington, c. xxvi.

at Florence. The newly-arrived prelates were overwhelmed with insults, and Marc of Ephesus alone was saluted as a courageous champion of the faith, who had amid the general apostacy of his brethren maintained inviolate its honour and integrity. The papal legates were expelled from the East, and "Anathema against all those who are united with the Latins," was the universal cry. It was not, however, until 1452, that the union of Florence was wholly annulled. On the twelfth of December in that year, a Latin priest was celebrating the divine offices in the Church of St. Sophia. As soon as mention was made in the course of the service of the names of the pope, Nicholas V., and the Latin patriarch, it was immediately deserted by the Greek clergy and people, and a vast and gloomy silence prevailed in that venerable temple^a. The city rose in general commotion; the sanctuary was declared to be polluted; those who had assisted at the Latin service were excommunicated: and thus was severed the last bond of union which connected the Oriental Church with that of Rome. These scandalous divisions were soon followed by a signal chastisement. In the following year Constantinople fell into the power of the Turks, and the Greek empire was overthrown. The rites of a false religion were henceforth to profane those altars, where the Christian mysteries had lately been celebrated before the last of the Cæsars^o.

SIXTEENTH
CENTURY.

Revival of
the schism.

Fall of the
Greek
empire.

We must now return to the Western Church during the early part of the sixteenth century. The time of the Reformation was at hand. Before we enter on its

^a Phranza, lib. iii. c. 20.

^o Vide Cantemir, p. 102, quoted by Gibbon, vol. iv. p. 378.

SIXTEENTH
CENTURY.Causes of
the Refor-
mation.Revival of
learning in
Italy.

history, it will be well to consider in reviewing the principal causes from which it sprung, I. the state of Europe when it was first preached; II. the nature of the change required in the doctrine and discipline of the Church.

The great and primary cause of the Reformation was undoubtedly to be found in the prevalence of ecclesiastical corruptions; but there were many other circumstances which under the guidance of Divine Providence, accelerated its rise and progress. Of these the chief was the general revival of learning.

I. The foundations of literature had during the fourteenth century been laid in Italy by Dante and Petrarch. When the next century opened, all the Cis-alpine cities were with a common ardour engaged in giving new life to letters, and in calling back the arts to their long-deserted seats. Books were everywhere sought. Copies of manuscripts were compared, corrected, multiplied; public libraries formed; chairs for the Greek and Latin languages, richly endowed, and filled by able professors, were founded in every city. Medals, inscriptions, statues, were collected from every quarter. New lights were thrown upon philosophy and mathematics; astronomical calculations were made with more accuracy, by the help of which navigators from the same Italy soon discovered another world^p. The general revival of knowledge derived a new impulse from the patronage of a literary pope; and the treasures of antiquity were eagerly collected by Nicholas V. in the galleries of the Vatican at Rome^q.

^p Vide the eloquent description in Berington, (*Hist. Middle Ages*, p. 313); to whom I wish to acknowledge my obligations.

^q Platina de Vit. Pontif. Donatus Roma. Vespesiano, *Ber. Ital.*, Script. xxv.

When, in 1453, the Greek empire was overthrown, and the standard of the Osmanlis planted on the walls of Constantinople, the sages of the East fled from the captured city, and took refuge in Italy, bringing with them the literary treasures of ancient Greece. Princes and prelates eagerly contended for the honour of receiving them; and their learning was emulated by the Italian schools and universities. Florence became a second Athens. The Florentines Poggio and Valla may be justly classed with the Greeks, George of Trebizond, Cardinal Bessarion, and Lascaris^r. The revival soon extended itself to the universities of France, Italy, and Germany, but with very different results. In the two former countries it was associated with levity and irreligion, and tinged by that unbelief which prevailed in the Roman conclave, and, if we may depend on historical testimony^s, influenced the pope himself. "I fear," exclaimed Erasmus, "that with the study of ancient literature we may also see the return of ancient paganism^t." In Germany it was the reverse. Here secular and theological learning were restored at the same time. The eminent Reuchlin employed himself in translating portions of the Holy Scriptures. The people read them with incredible avidity. At the universities they were perused in the original languages. The desire of Germany to accomplish the Reformation was owing chiefly to this perusal of the divine Word, and based upon that fear of God which is the beginning of true wisdom. In 1440 the art of printing was invented; copies of the Scriptures were thus

SIXTEENTH
CENTURY.

Intro-
duction of
Greek
literature.

Learning in
Italy and
France.

And in
Germany.

Invention
of printing.

^r Tiraboschi, vol. vi.

^s Mornæus, Hist. Pap., p. 820.

^t Quoted by D'Aubigné, Hist. Ref., p. 41.

SIXTEENTH CENTURY. multiplied, and increased facilities were obtained of circulating, together with the works of antiquity, the more recent writings of Reuchlin and Erasmus.

Mediæval errors.

II. It may be observed that the introduction of those errors in faith and practice which continued to increase until the time of the Reformation, was so gradual, that it is seldom difficult to detect their origin or to trace their progress. Thus transubstantiation undoubtedly first arose from a desire of arbitrarily explaining the manner of Christ's presence in the Holy Eucharist, which had been left undefined by the reverence and piety of the early Church. The invocation of saints and adoration of relics, with many similar practices, are, as we have already observed, in great degree attributable to the compromise made with heathenism in the fourth century. The celibacy of the clergy, and the withdrawal of the cup from the laity, were intended to promote an undue influence in the Christian priesthood. Nor were the motives which led to the perpetuation of such abuses less exceptionable than those from which they at first sprung. They were favoured by popular superstition, and from them the successors of St. Peter derived the richest gifts which were poured into the apostolic treasury.

Their origin.

Favoured by the popes.

Their character.

Yet it may be asserted with justice, that the Church of Rome during the middle ages rather obscured than superseded the doctrines of truth^a. Her errors arose from human additions to the precepts of the Divine Word, which were to a great degree "made of none effect" by the supplemental tradition of the later centuries. But she still retained in every age

^a Vide Wordsworth's *Theophilus Anglicanus*, c. v. p. 194, sqq.

the essentials of a Church, the great and distinctive features of the Catholic faith. The wisest of her reformers was able to reflect with joy and confidence that she had always held with more or less clearness the Word and Sacraments of Christ, an apostolic succession of ministers, the primitive Creeds, and the institutions of the first four Œcumenic Councils*. Thus it became the just object of a Reformation, not to set up new doctrines, but to maintain the old†; to reject only whatever was novel and erroneous; not to found a new Church, but to restore to that which had been from the beginning, the purity of earlier and better days‡.

SIXTEENTH
CENTURY.

Their
extent.

Object of
the Reformation.

In considering the character of these times, it is worthy of observation that the facts related by the ecclesiastical annalist constitute but little of the real "history" of the mediæval Church. This is happily to be found, not in the records of pontifical arrogance and despotism, not in the fanaticism of the mendicant orders, but in the silent and unobtrusive virtues of the inferior clergy; in the deep, though often misdirected, piety of the Mystics; in the zealous labours of those missionaries who spread the knowledge of Christ from Finland to Japan; in the unrecorded excellence which often adorned the cloister. "The eye of the historian is fixed by the austere and wonder-working saint, the pompous prelate, and the intriguing and rapacious cardinal; while it overlooks the plants which flourish in the lower regions of serenity and fruitfulness§." Of this we are, too, reminded by one of the least impartial of writers. "Let us," says

Review of
the mediæval
Church.

* Martin Luther, in 8. Joan. c. xvi., et contra Anabapt.

† Beveridge, vol. i. serm. vi. p. 126, Hooker, v. iii.

‡ Mason, Vindic. Eccl., c. viii.

§ Waddington, c. xxviii.

SIXTEENTH
CENTURY.

D'Aubigné^b, "render some honour at least to this Church of the middle age, which succeeded that of the apostles and fathers, and which preceded that of the reformers. Fallen, and ever sinking into deeper and deeper bondage as she was, the Church was still the Church. This amounts to saying that she ever most powerfully befriended man. Bound as were her hands, they could still bless. Great servants of Jesus Christ shed for ages a benignant light around them; in the lowliest convents, and in the obscurest parish, poor monks and poor priests were to be found for the comforting of great sorrows. We must not confound the Catholic Church with the popedom. The latter was the oppressor, the former the oppressed. The Reformation, in declaring war against the one, announced deliverance to the other. Nay, it must even be admitted that the popedom itself was at times, in the hand of God, who can bring good out of evil, a necessary counterpoise to the might and ambition of princes."

Pius III.,
A.D. 1503.

Alexander VI. died in the year 1503. He was succeeded by Pius III., a weak and feeble old man, who died within a month from the time of his elevation to the papal chair. On his death, the cardinals elected a nephew of Sixtus IV., who took the title of Julius II.

Julius II.

His character.

The fame of this pontiff is connected with civil, rather than ecclesiastical, history. His character was bold, warlike, and courageous; and he is said to have thrown the keys of St. Peter into the Tiber, declaring that henceforth he would govern by the sword.

^b D'Aubigné, *Hist. Ref.*, vol. i. p. 20.

Under his administration, the north of Italy was compelled to acknowledge the sovereignty of the pontifical see^c; and it has been supposed that, if his reign had been prolonged a few years, the whole extent of the peninsula would have been united under the sceptre of St. Peter^d. Proud and turbulent, he was engaged in incessant disputes with the monarchs of Europe. In 1511, the king of France induced some of his cardinals to assemble a council at Pisa, to oppose the encroachments of the Holy See on the liberty of the Church. Julius retorted by convoking a rival council at the Lateran. Its deliberations were however suddenly suspended by his death, on February 13, 1513.

SIXTEENTH
CENTURY.

His govern-
ment.

His death.

If we required a proof of the prevalence of ecclesiastical abuses at this time, when, to use the expressive words of a Roman historian^e, "the Church could neither bear her disorders nor her remedies," we should find it in the fact, that the prelate who succeeded Julius had been ordained at the age of seven years, made an abbot before he was eight years old, and at the age of thirteen, a cardinal. Descended from the noble family of the Medici, magnificent in his tastes, and unbounded in his liberality, Leo X. possessed all those qualities which attract the admiration of the world. He was himself learned, and became a diligent patron of art and science; and the papal court was exceeded by none in magnificence. He was at the same time vain, and frivolous, and extravagant; careless of the duties, even of the decencies, of religion. To such hands was committed

Accession
and charac-
ter of Leo X.

^c Denina, lib. xix. c. 7.

^d Waddington, c. xxvii. p. 658.

^e Francisco. de Victoria.

SIXTEENTH CENTURY. the supreme government of the Church, on the eve of the most eventful crisis in her history.

Martin Luther.

The time had now come when God was about to deliver the Church from this Egyptian^f bondage. Martin Luther, the chief instrument in the great work of reformation, was born at Eisleben, in Saxony, A.D. 1483. His father, a respectable miner, removed to Mansfeld, in Thuringia, shortly after his birth ; and here Martin received the elements of education in the Latin school. When, in 1497, he had reached the age of fourteen years, he was sent to the school of the Franciscans at Magdeburg. Andreas Proles, provincial of the Augustinians, was at that time preaching with zeal against the prevalent abuses of the Church ; and some have supposed that his discourses greatly influenced the mind of Luther in after years. From Magdeburg he removed to the then celebrated school of Eisenach, where he remained four years in the Franciscan college. In 1501 he entered the university of Erfurth.

His early life.

Reads the Scriptures.

Here he perused with eagerness the holy Scriptures, which were at that time little known and read. He was neither acquainted with Greek nor Hebrew, and therefore availed himself of the Latin translation. He became renowned at Erfurth for his learning and diligence, which, as we are informed by Melancthon, endeared him to the whole university. He studied the philosophy of the middle ages, in the writings of Bonaventura, Occam, and Thomas Aquinas ; and became acquainted with Cicero, Virgil, and the classic writers. " His piety was as earnest as his diligence. He was, we are told, tremblingly anxious to secure

His character.

^f The expression is that of Grostête. (See Churton, c. xx. p. 372.)

his salvation; and engaged in deep and frequent meditations on the judgments and wrath of God, and on the vengeance which He had sometimes taken upon the sins of men^s."

In 1505 he became master of arts and doctor in philosophy. Shortly afterwards he went on a visit to his father at Mansfeld. While returning to Erfurth, an incident occurred which influenced the whole course of his future life. He was at a short distance from the latter town, when he was overtaken by a violent storm; a friend, who accompanied him, was killed in his presence by lightning; and a thunderbolt fell at the feet of the survivor^h. The mind of Luther was deeply impressed by this awful event; he resolved henceforth to dedicate himself to the service of God in the retirement of the cloister; and on the 17th of August entered the convent of the Augustine monks. Here he could not find that rest which he had trusted to secure when removed from the troubles and commotions of the world. His bodily frame was weakened by austerities, and by incessant study; his mind oppressed by convictions of unrepented sin. When about this time, John Staupitz, ^{Becomes a monk.} John Staupitz, the vicar-general of the Augustinians, visited the monastery at Erfurth, his attention was drawn by the sad demeanour of the youthful monk; he approached him with affectionate earnestness, and exhorted him to confess to his ecclesiastical superior the sources of his inward inquietude and distress of mind.

Luther confided his sorrows to the pious and venerable Staupitz. "In vain," he exclaimed, "do I seek

^s Hook, *Life of Luther*, p. 124; Stebbing, *Hist. Ref.*, p. 27, sqq.

^h D'Aubigné gives a different account; (p. 63.)

SIXTEENTH
CENTURY.

Comforts
Luther.

to advance in grace; sin is ever stronger than my good resolutions." "My friend," replied Staupitz, "do not distress yourself with these high thoughts and speculations. Look to the wounds of Jesus Christ, to the Blood which He hath shed for you; there you will see the mercy of God. Listen to the Son of God, when He says to you, You are My sheep; you hear My voice: none shall pluck you out of My hand."

These words of consolation sank deep into the heart of Luther. The work of Staupitz was continued, after his departure from Erfurth, by an old monk, who exhorted him to trust in the mercies of God, and persevere in the path of duty.

Theological
lectures of
Luther.

In 1507 Luther was ordained priest, and in the following year he obtained, through the influence of Staupitz, a professorship in the University of Wittenburg, which had lately been founded by the Elector Frederic of Saxony. In 1511 he took the degree of bachelor in divinity; his theological lectures soon became famous, and were attended by the most learned men of Germany. "He had an eloquence," says Bossuet, "full of life and energy, which drew along with it and ravished those who heard him¹."

His mission
to Rome.

Some disputes arose at this time between the monasteries and the vicar-general, which rendered necessary an appeal to Rome. Luther was chosen by the monks to advocate their cause. He crossed the Alps, and descended into the rich and fertile plains of Italy. Here he found at every step new subjects of astonishment and of scandal¹. He was disgusted as he advanced towards Rome, by the

¹ Bossuet, livr. 1. Hist. des Variations.

¹ D'Aubigné, p. 75.

luxury and profligacy which reigned in the monasteries; but trusted to find in the capital of the Christian world some remains of ancient piety. He was doomed to bitter disappointment. "The dissolution of morals and the infidelity prevalent throughout Italy seemed to come to a climax in Rome. The secularity and profligacy of the papal court had been infectious, and the demoralization of the Roman people was complete. Everything cried aloud for reformation. . . . The public services of the Church were performed with a perfunctory and contemptuous haste^k." While Luther was celebrating one mass, seven had been performed by the superior volubility of the Roman priests^l. "Hurry on, hurry on,"—they exclaimed,— "restore our Lady her Son without delay^m." The profanity was general. The immortality of the soul was questioned in the philosophic schoolsⁿ; and no one could pass for a man of learning who did not put forth heterodox opinions regarding the Christian faith^o.

SIXTEENTH
CENTURY.

State of
Rome.

Full of horror at the undisguised iniquities of the pontifical court, Luther returned to Saxony. In 1512 he took his degree of doctor in divinity; and shortly afterwards was appointed by Staupitz vicar-general of the monasteries. His time was now fully occupied. His talent and eloquence had attracted the notice of the learned; and multitudes still resorted to hear his sermons, in which he set forth with clearness and decision the scriptural doctrines of justification by

Popularity
of Luther.

He preaches
justification
by faith.

^k Hook, *Life of Luther*, p. 129.

^l D'Aubigné, p. 77.

^m L. Opp. xix. von der Winkelmesse.

ⁿ Ranke's *History of the Popes*, bk. i. p. 55.

^o Caracciolo, *MS. Life of Paul IV.*, quoted by Ranke, p. 56.

SIXTEENTH CENTURY. faith^p, of the free remission of sin, and of the necessity of grace unto salvation.

Preaching
of indul-
gences.

The extravagance of Leo X. had exhausted the pontifical treasury, at the very time when large sums were required for the completion of the magnificent church of St. Peter's at Rome, which had been founded by his predecessor, Julius II. In order to obtain necessary funds, Leo resolved to have recourse to the sale of indulgences. He granted the privilege of dispensing them to the Dominican friars; and Tetzel, the prior of that Order, was appointed the commissioner of the pope in conducting the spiritual traffic. He passed through Germany in pomp, everywhere proclaiming the merit of the "holy indulgences," and recommending them to the popular credulity in terms of extreme profanity^q. The following is a translation of those circulated by Tetzel:—

Form of
indulgences
is-ued by
Tetzel.

"May our Lord Jesus Christ have mercy on thee, and absolve thee, by the merits of His most holy Passion! And I by His authority, that of His blessed apostles Peter and Paul, and of the most Holy See, granted and committed to me in these parts, do absolve thee, first, from all ecclesiastical censures, in whatsoever manner they have been incurred; and then from all thy sins, transgressions, and excesses, how enormous soever they be, even from such as are reserved for the cognizance of the Apostolic See. And as far as the keys of the Church extend, I remit to you all punishment which you deserve on their account; and I restore you to the holy Sacraments of

^p Hilscher's *Luther's Anwesenheit in Alt. Dresden*, 1728.

^q This is confessed by Maimbourg, *Hist. Luth.*, p. 21. Vide also Matthesius in loc.

the Church, to the unity of the faith, and to that innocence and purity which you possessed at baptism : so that if you should die now, the gates of punishment shall be shut, and the gates of the heavenly paradise shall be opened. And if you shall not die at present, this grace shall remain in full force when you are on the point of death. In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost^r.”

SIXTEENTH
CENTURY.

In 1517 Tetzel sold these indulgences in some towns near Wittenburg, and some of them were purchased by burgesses of that city. When they next presented themselves to Luther for absolution, he refused to bestow it, until they had performed the penances which he assigned to them. They pleaded their indulgences, and refused to obey. Luther remained firm ; and they hastened to Tetzel with the alarming intelligence that their confessor disputed the validity of his letters.

Resisted by
Luther.

Tetzel was enraged, and commanded a pile of faggots to be collected in the market-place, that all might be reminded of the authority with which he was armed against those who decried the papal merchandise. The only effect of this measure was to awaken still further the indignant zeal of Luther. On the eve of All Saints' Day he publicly affixed to the door of the great church of Wittenburg a table of ninety-five theses, in which, after acknowledging the papal authority, he protested against the scandals which had resulted from its abuse. At the same time he appended to the document another solemn protestation, in which he declared that he desired to say or

He draws
up the
Theses of
Witten-
burg.

^r The translation of Beausobre, Hist. Ref., vol. i. ; Seckendorf, p. 14 ; Waddington, c. xxviii. p. 690.

SIXTEENTH
CENTURY.

And ad-
dresses
Albert of
Mayence.

affirm nothing that was not founded on holy Scripture, the fathers of the Church, and the rights and decretals of the see of Rome^a. He wrote also a letter of remonstrance to Albert, the archbishop of Mayence, in which he exhorted him to suppress the iniquitous mission of Tetzel and the Dominicans^t.

Circulation
of the
Theses.

These measures were regarded with great approbation by the princes of Germany. The Emperor Maximilian and the Elector Frederic read and admired the Theses of Wittenburg. They were carried by some of Tetzel's emissaries to Rome, and presented to Leo, with a request that he would denounce the writer as a heretic. The pontiff troubled himself but little with the dispute, and refused to interfere. "This friar Martin Luther," he replied, "is a very fine genius, and all that is told against him arises from the jealousy of the monks".

Propo-
sitions of
Tetzel, A.D.
1517.

In order to counteract the effect of the theses, Tetzel published at Francfort a number of counter-propositions, and committed the writings of Luther to the flames. The students of Wittenburg retorted by burning those of Tetzel.

Meanwhile the theses of Luther were circulated throughout Germany. The alarm of the monks at the spread of his doctrines was great. Sylvester Prierias, the censor of the pontifical palace, Hochstraten, a Dominican of Cologne, and the celebrated Eckius, professor of divinity in the university of Ingoldstadt, hastened to combat them in their treatises and sermons. Luther replied to Eckius and Prierias in a letter, which he prefaced by an address

^a D'Aubigné, p. 111.

^t Eppius, livr. 1.

^u "Che frate . . . haveva un bellissimo ingegno." Brandelli, Hist. Par., 3.

to the pope, written in very submissive terms. He represented to Leo the great abuses which had arisen from the mission of Tetzel. He exhorted him not to receive false accusations; and added that the Elector Frederic, a prince of piety and wisdom, would not have allowed him thus long to teach at Wittenburg, if he had really been guilty of the heresies imputed to him^a. "Most holy father," he concludes, "I am ready to submit to you all that I have and am. Ruin my cause or embrace it; give me life, or put me to death; confirm or revoke, approve or disapprove, as you please. I own your voice as that of Jesus Christ, who rules and speaks by you; and if I have deserved death, I refuse not to die." This letter is dated on Trinity Sunday, 1518.

SIXTEENTH
CENTURY.

Luther ad-
dresses the
pope, 1518.

It is evident from the tenor of these expressions, that Luther did not then entertain any thoughts of separating from the Church of Rome; he was only desirous of removing some of her most evident and unscriptural innovations^b. But his doctrine and influence had now spread throughout Germany. They had excited the opposition of the pope and the Emperor Maximilian, both of whom were equally desirous to check any attempts made to reform the Church. Luther was no longer to be allowed to remain in peace.

Policy of
Maximilian
and Leo.

In 1518 Maximilian held an Imperial Diet at Ausbourg, to which the pope sent Cardinal Cajetan as his representative. On the 5th of August in that year, the emperor addressed a letter to Rome, in which he requested Leo to exert his authority in

Letter of
Maximilian.

^a Eppius, Vit. Luth., bk. i.

^b Hook's Life of Luther, Vol. Eccl. Biogr. vii. p. 143.

SIXTEENTH
CENTURY.

Leo cites
Luther to
appear at
Rome.

arresting the progress of pernicious heresies; and promised that he would strictly execute whatever should be enjoined by the authority of the Holy See². The pope in reply cited Luther to appear at Rome within sixty days, to give an account of his doctrine to an ecclesiastical court. He wrote at the same time to the elector of Saxony, exhorting him to give up Luther to Cardinal Cajetan. He denounced the punishments of excommunication against all who should protect the reformer; and promised to those who should assist in his apprehension the benefit of a plenary indulgence.

Luther was thus placed in a situation of extreme danger, from which he was only delivered by the intercession of the Elector Frederic and the university of Wittenburg, who represented to the pope that the state of his health would not bear the fatigues and perils of a journey to Italy, and requested that his cause might be tried before Cardinal Cajetan in some German city. Leo assented; Ausbourg was appointed as the place of conference; and in that city Luther appeared before the papal legate on the 12th of October, 1518.

Cajetan.

Thomas de Vio, Cardinal Cajetan, was renowned for his skill in scholastic theology^a. He received Luther with kindness, but evidently expected him to recant his supposed errors, and retract whatever he had written against the indulgences. "Most worthy father," exclaimed Luther, "I appear before you as a humble and obedient son of the holy Catholic Church; I acknowledge that it was I who published the pro-

^a Raynaldus, ann. 1518.

^a Vide Hook's Life of Cajetan; and Stebbing, Hist. Ref., p. 38.

positions and theses that are the subject of enquiry. SIXTEENTH CENTURY.
 I am ready to listen with all subjection to the charges brought against me; and if I am in error, to be instructed in the truth." "My son," replied Cajetan, His requirements to Luther.
 "there are three propositions to which I require your assent. Firstly, you must own your faults, and retract your errors. Secondly, you must abstain from disseminating your opinions. Thirdly, you must in future avoid everything which may disturb the peace of the Church."

Luther replied by a request that "he might be informed wherein he had erred." This led to a discussion, in which the cardinal, instead of pursuing the more prudent course of exercising his legatine commission, entered into a formal dispute with Luther on the question of the indulgences, and on the doctrine of the sacraments^b. The conference at Ausbourg. The conference ended little to the satisfaction of either party. It was resumed on the following day, when Luther read a declaration, in which he expressed himself willing to submit his theses to the Universities of Basle, Fribourg, Louvain, and Paris, and to retract whatever they should pronounce erroneous. Cajetan would not consent to this proposal, and after a long interview with Luther commanded him either to retract, or return no more to his presence. Luther then wrote to him a letter in terms of the greatest humility; but the irritated vanity of the legate would not allow him to reply. Luther, after waiting four days for an answer, determined on seeking safety by flight, and on the 19th

^b D'Aubigné, vol. i. p. 156.

SIXTEENTH CENTURY. of October, 1518, secretly took his departure from Ausbourg.

Frederic resolves to protect Luther.

Cajetan, on discovering that Luther had escaped, wrote a letter full of anger and resentment to the Elector Frederic, in which he begged him either to banish the Reformer from his states, or send him to Rome for punishment. Frederic replied that "he had sent Luther to Ausbourg, according to promise, in order that he might, if wrong, be convinced of his error, not forced to recant by any tyrannical proceedings." "The most orthodox universities," he added, "did not consider Luther's doctrine impious and heretical; and he was therefore determined never to drive from Wittenburg a man of so much piety and learning." The reformers were inspired by new confidence; Luther persevered in his resistance to the prevalent errors, and his labours were crowned with such success, that a very powerful party was soon formed in Germany, stedfastly resolved to accomplish, by the grace of God, the removal of those abuses which marred the integrity of the Church.

Conduct of Leo.

The impolitic conduct of the pope at this crisis increased the power of the reformers. It was resolved to legalize, instead of abolishing, the most flagrant corruptions attacked by Luther: a papal brief again authorized the preaching of indulgences, and declared that they were founded on the practice of the ancient Church.

Protest of Luther.

Luther immediately composed a solemn protest, and an appeal to a General Council. "To this course," he said, "I find myself obliged to have

recourse, inasmuch as the pope, who is God's vicar SIXTEENTH CENTURY. on earth, may, like any other man, err, or sin; and that the appeal to a council is the only safeguard against unjust actions, which it is impossible to resist."

This event is justly considered as terminating the first period of the Reformation.

APPENDIX A.

A CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE^a

OF THE CHRISTIAN FATHERS, AND OTHER EMINENT
MEN, AND OF THE PRINCIPAL COUNCILS.

Dates.	The fathers, and eminent men connected with the history of the Church.	Principal Councils.
100	Clement of Rome.	
	Ignatius.	
	Pliny.	
	Tacitus.	
140	Justin Martyr.	
160	Polycarp.	
190	Irenæus.	
196	Clement of Alexandria.	
220	Tertullian.	
230	Origen.	
250	Cyprian.	
256		Synod of Carthage, on the baptism of heretics.
310	Lactantius.	
315	Constantine.	Arles (314).
	Eusebius.	
	Arius.	Nice, General Council of, (325).
	Athanasius.	
370	Chrysostom.	
385	Theodosius the Great.	First Council of Constantinople (381), on the Divinity of the Holy Ghost; (2nd General).
	Ambrose.	
	Jerome.	
	Augustine.	
432	Nestorius.	Council of Ephesus (431), against Nestorius; (3rd General).
460	Eutyches.	
	Leo the Great.	Council of Chalcedon (451), against Eutyches; (4th General).
530	Benedict of Nursia.	
590	St. Columba.	
604	St. Austin, Abp. Canterbury.	
	Gregory the Great.	

^a This table has been adapted from that appended to Dr. Waddington's History; and the dates followed, on the authority of Spanheim and others.

APPENDIX A.

Dates.	Fathers, and eminent men.	Principal Councils.
707	The Venerable Bede.	
	St. Boniface, Abp. Mayence.	
752	Charles Martel.	Constantinople (754),
757	Pepin.	against images.
772	Charlemagne.	Nice (787), for the
	Alcuin.	restoration of images.
		Aix-la-Chapelle (789).
		Francfort (794).
817	Benedict of Aniane.	
827	Claude of Turin.	
850	Paschase Radbert.	
	Bertramn.	
	Joannes Scotus.	
854	Hincmar of Rheims.	
890	Alfred.	
965	Dunstan.	
1073	Lanfranc.	
1090	Berenger.	
	Gregory VII.	Placentia and Cler-
1099	Peter the Hermit.	mont (1095) originate
		the first crusade.
1119	Pierre de Bruys.	
1143	Bernard.	
1170	Thomas à Becket.	
1185	Peter Waldus.	
1191	Dominic.	
1216	Innocent III.	Fourth Lateran (1215),
1254	Innocent IV.	under Innocent III.
	Grostète.	
	Louis IX. of France.	
1303	Boniface VIII.	
	Philip the Fair.	
1370	John Wicliff.	
1387	Catherine of Sienna.	
1410	Gerson.	Pisa (1407).
1415	John Huss.	Constance (1414).
	Jerome of Prague.	
1431	Julian Cesarini.	
1447	The Cardinal of Arles.	Basle (1431).
1492	Savonarola.	
1503	Erasmus.	
1520	Luther.	

APPENDIX B.

LIST OF BOOKS RECOMMENDED IN THE STUDY OF CHURCH HISTORY.

1. Eusebius' Ecclesiastical History.
 2. Waddington's History of the Church of Christ.
 3. Fleury, _____
 4. Dupin, _____
 5. Echard, _____
 6. Mosheim, _____
 7. Potter's Discourse on Church Government.
 8. Bingham's Antiquities of the Christian Church.
 9. Cave's Lives of the Fathers.
 10. Palmer on the Early Liturgies.
 11. Newman's Arians of the Fourth Century.
 12. Stillingfleet's Origines Sacræ.
 13. Hooker's Ecclesiastical Polity.
 14. Hook's Ecclesiastical Biographies.
 15. Churton's Early English Church.
 16. Soames' Bampton Lectures.
 17. Massingberd on the English Reformation.
 18. Burnet's History of the Reformation.
 19. Mason de Ministerio Anglicano.
 20. Wheatly on the Common Prayer.
- } On the Church
of England,





